

GOOD NEWS

Fall 2018



Core Practice Model brings changes to foster care

Child welfare in Illinois is changing...for good. According to the current strategic plan for the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the department is going to "immerse" itself in lessons learned and enlist entire communities and their resources to better protect children and youth from abuse and/or neglect.

In the spring of 2018, Caritas Family Solutions was chosen by DCFS as an "immersion" agency to help lead a coordinated, collaborative approach to protecting and helping young people in cases of abuse or neglect. This will occur through implementation of a Core Practice Model.

"We were pleased to learn that DCFS chose Caritas to be a partner in implementing the Core Practice Model," said Caritas CEO Gary Huelsmann. "It is because of our size and excellent performance in foster care that we were asked to be the first, and currently the only, immersion agency in Illinois."

There are approximately 15,050 children and youth in foster care in Illinois at this time; more than 1,300 are managed by Caritas, now the third largest foster care service provider in the state.

Implementation involves training staff in the Core Practice Model which includes trauma-informed care; developing enhanced services, such as intensive placement services; and process changes to include utilizing Child and Family Team Meetings (CFTM) to engage and empower families to drive their own change process. The team meetings encourage full disclosure, open participation, collaboration and planning for permanency.

All foster care staff at Caritas Family Solutions are being trained in the Core Practice Model. The staff in Belleville and Mount Vernon were trained last year; this year Carterville, East Alton and Effingham staffs are receiving the training. Training is provided by the Child Welfare Group through local universities who in turn send the trainers onsite.

"There is a lot of work up front, learning new approaches. But all who go through the training say it seems to be beneficial to do child welfare this way versus how we have been doing it," said Mark Becker, Director of Foster Care at Caritas Family Solutions.

"As a private agency we are very excited about how much DCFS is valuing our input with this immersion partnership," added Becker. "We feel we are an equal player at the table and that's refreshing."

The goal is to eventually implement the Core Practice Model statewide with an overall goal to reduce the length of time a family needs to be involved in the child welfare process. It's a win-win situation for all.

Kickoff events are planned for October 18 and 19 to introduce the Core Practice Model to those most involved in foster care throughout Southern Illinois: caseworkers, attorneys, judges and other professional support personnel such as counselors, teachers and foster parents.



OUR CORE PRACTICE MODEL EMBRACES A SET OF VALUES

WE BELIEVE THAT FAMILIES COME FIRST
We can do nothing for them without them.
If we don't hear them, we can't help them.

WE BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE HAS THE ABILITY TO CHANGE
All of us – including parents and children deserve that opportunity.
Change is a journey – not an event.

WE BELIEVE THAT SUPERVISION IS FIRST AND FOREMOST ABOUT TEACHING
That means supporting, encouraging, and modeling the behaviors you want from staff.
That also means supporting, encouraging, and modeling the behaviors you want from families and children.

WE BELIEVE THAT PERMANENCY IS ABOUT THE CHILD, NOT ABOUT US
No child should grow up in foster care.



BOARD of DIRECTORS

Matt Rakers
Chairperson

Julie Reed
Vice-Chairperson

Dr. John Slosar, Jr.
Treasurer

Jill Wenzel
Secretary

Stan Brandmeyer
Susan Hoff
Gregg Korte
Danny Lee
Lisa McQuade
Trish Murphy
Dr. George Paletta, Jr.
Justin Price
Kevin Riggs
Stephen Telken
Roy Whitley

Chief Executive Officer
Gary Huelsmann, MSW

Thank You RETIRING Board Member

A two-term member of our Board of Directors “retired” at the start of this fiscal year: **Ella York** joined the Board in September 2012. By day, Ella is an Assistant State’s Attorney in the Marion area. After hours, she was a tireless advocate for all things Caritas.



Ella primarily served on the Development Committee for several years, playing an valuable part in growing our Development efforts across the agency. In the last two years, she served on the Planning and Program Committee, eventually serving as Committee Chair.

During her tenure as a Board member, the agency grew immensely and built a foundation for years to come. We are so grateful for her service and expertise as well as her passionate dedication to the agency and willingness to go above and beyond for all those we serve. Thank you, Ella!

Welcome NEW Board Members

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



Susan Hoff joined the Board in June 2018 and serves on the Planning and Program Committee. Susan and her husband Bob own Performance Roofing Co. and they also founded Fontebella Maternity Home in 2009. They live in Lebanon and have three children and several grandchildren.



Gregg Korte joined the Board in June 2018, having previously served on the Board at Fontebella Maternity Home. He also serves on the Planning and Program Committee. Gregg is vice-president of Korte & Luitjohan Contractors. He resides in Edwardsville with his wife Celeste and their two teenagers; they also have three older children.



Roy Whitley joined the Board in June 2018 and serves on the Performance, Operations and Monitoring Committee. Roy is Vice President of Operations at Rx Outreach, a nonprofit pharmacy, and is also an adjunct professor at Harris Stowe State University. He lives in St. Louis with his wife, Tiffany, and their two adolescent children.

It's Permanent!

The new tax reform law brings the ability of donors age 70.5 and older to donate the distribution from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to a charity. Now that the law is permanent, the donor’s “required minimum distribution” each year can be distributed in part or in whole to a qualified charitable organization in order to avoid paying tax on the distribution. Please contact your financial advisor to learn more, or call Chief Development Officer Judy Woodruff at 618-213-8703.



Caritas Day 2018

Our second annual Caritas Day on July 31, 2018, was an incredible experience of giving and celebrating in honor of our 71st anniversary as a social services agency in Southern Illinois. We are so grateful to everyone who shared the day with us in person and in spirit. The graphic at right provides a summary of activity for the day.

We had an amazing crowd at the Ribbon Cutting for our newest program, **Fontebella Maternity Home** in O'Fallon. We chose Caritas Day for the ribbon cutting so that Fontebella founders, friends and followers felt like part of the Caritas family. Thanks to all who attended! (See photo above.)

The inaugural **Caritas Day Calendar Challenge** was a huge success; donors referred to a calendar for the month of July with suggested items to donate each day. As a result, we collected thousands of dollars worth of donated items in order to stock the shelves of our Resource Center for clients in need. Thanks to all who participated in this way! Every participant was entered into a drawing for a grand prize. The grand prize winner was Timothy Freeman from Lebanon, Illinois who received special tickets to a St. Louis Cardinals game (donated by Thompson Coburn LLC.)

There were also 20 volunteer projects happening at several locations for Caritas Day. Groups from Ameren Illinois, Associated Bank, AT&T, Boy Scout Troop 11, HireLevel, Legence Bank, Lowe's, Williamson Co. Rotary and Women4Given as well as many individuals assisted with projects ranging from landscaping and yardwork to cleaning and organizing and even installing a swingset at one of our CILA homes. Thanks to ALL our volunteers for your gifts of time, skills and energy!

Caritas Family Solutions was incorporated as Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Belleville on July 31, 1947. Through a handful of name changes and now as an independent entity, Caritas carries on the same yet expanded mission to meet needs all across Southern Illinois.





Every loving home needs a homecoming

Friday, September 28, 2018, was the big day. Outfits had been chosen, hair combed and styled, and even flowers ordered by some. The time had finally arrived for "Starry Night", the first homecoming dance sponsored by our Community Integrated Living Arrangement (CILA) program for adults with developmental disabilities. More than 70 local adult residents of both our and other CILA homes, ranging in age from late teens to senior citizens, gathered in the multi-purpose room at 900 Royal Heights Road to meet up with friends and get their groove on. Thanks to all our staff, volunteers from Junior Service Club of St. Clair County, food and decoration donors who helped make this a special evening for all.

Call 618-258-8750 and/or visit caritasfamilysolutions.org/CILA for more information about our CILA program.



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."

Permanent employment is music to the ears for SCSEP

Brenda Lancaster, recent participant in our Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and an alumna from Lewis and Clark Community College (LCCC), has been hired to instruct the school's first Gospel Choir, a new addition to the Music Department's curriculum for the Fall 2018 semester.

Lancaster joined SCSEP in 2017, and was assigned to the LCCC Music Department, where she served as music assistant and vocal coach for the LCCC Rock Ensemble, under the direction of Music Coordinator Louis Michael. Caritas' SCSEP has been working with government and non-profit organizations (including educational institutions such as LCCC) since 1974 to help provide training and additional work experience for those 55 and older.

SCSEP gave Brenda a foot in the door to her new position, for which she is grateful. "I was looking to supplement my retirement income when I learned about SCSEP. It has opened so many opportunities, so many doors, that otherwise would not have been there for me without first participating in SCSEP," she said.

Her first placement was at Caritas, where she was responsible for recruiting more host agencies in Madison County for the program. She was successful at getting LCCC on board.

Prior to SCSEP, Lancaster's experience included helping to organize the Riverbend Community Gospel Choir, where she serves as the director and vocal coach, and serving as a planning committee member for the Pie Town Music Festival. She served as the Minister of Music at the Greater St. James Baptist Church in Alton for 14 years and as a booking agent for the Music Association of St. Louis (MASL) for three years.

Lancaster graduated from LCCC with an Associate in Arts degree and went on to pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Music Business at SIUE.

Students can join her Gospel Choir just for fun or for credit, the latter fulfilling one requirement for an A.A. in Music Production.

"SCSEP was very important in helping me acquire employment on campus and is really the main reason I am able to have this position," said Lancaster. "I know this is by design; I've been doing this all my life. But SCSEP had a way of jumpstarting a whole new chapter in my life."

The Department of Labor provides funding for SCSEP because helping older adults remain in the workforce provides a boost to our national economy: These workers pay taxes and cover more of their own expenses during their later years. Contrary to ageist stereotypes, older workers are a good investment, rating high on characteristics such as judgment, commitment to quality, attendance, and punctuality.

Want to know more? Call 618-1180 and/or visit caritasfamilysolutions.org/scsep.

Right: Brenda Lancaster

Below: The LCCC Rock Ensemble performed at the SCSEP End of Year Appreciation event this past December.



November is Adoption Awareness Month

National Adoption Day is November 17, 2018

At the National Adoption Day event in Madison County last year, these and other Caritas foster families became forever families for the children who had already been in their care. Congratulations!



The Munton Family ▲



The Wilson Family ▲



The Byers Family ▲

“The Face of Adoption”



Patrick* had been at St. John Bosco Children's Center (SJBCC) since 2015 and was recently discharged in July 2018. It took time, effort, and a lot of heart to finally find a good match with a step-down placement. They instantly connected and built a solid relationship for a few months in preparation for his departure.

Patrick is very passionate about art and expresses himself with it almost every day. Since his discharge was going to occur prior to the art projects planned for the children at St. John Bosco during Caritas Day, he created his masterpiece early. Without prompt, Patrick started to draw himself. When asked what a good title would be for his artwork, he replied, “The Face of Adoption.”



The artwork speaks volumes about this precious young boy who called SJBCC his home for the past three years. We thank everyone and anyone who influenced Patrick throughout his stay at SJBCC. He WILL do great things. It is not a “Goodbye,” it is a “See You Later.”

**Names have been changed to provide privacy.*

Caritas has been building families through adoption since 1947

The original charter from 1947 stated our purpose is “to assist in the placing of children in adoptive and boarding homes.” Today, Caritas Family Solutions is the largest adoption agency in Southern Illinois. We are licensed by the State of Illinois and accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA.) We provide free counseling and support for expectant parents considering adoption for their child, and guidance for families wishing to adopt. Whether adoption is from birth or foster care, we journey with everyone involved to secure loving, forever homes for children all across Southern Illinois.



Santa lives all year

Caritas Family Solutions coordinates gift-giving for hundreds of children in foster care each Christmas. We are always so humbled by the generosity of many individuals, organizations and businesses in the community who share their abundance every year.

Yet, children in care are also in need of items every day, all through the year. While we certainly want every child in our care to have a good Christmas, we also want them

to develop a healthy outlook in their daily life. We invite you to partner with us in this mission to focus on needs throughout the entire year instead of just one day.

In the true spirit of Christmas, we prefer that children learn to value people and relationships more than things.

As we approach the holiday season, we invite you to become a "Secret Santa Year Round," and consider a monetary gift that will offer the flexibility to provide care and necessities for children in foster care at Christmas as well as every day. (This can even be done on a monthly basis from a checking account or by credit card, or, of course, as a one-time gift.) Your gift is an investment in the current and future well-being of a child.

Monetary gifts assure that funding is available for what is needed most on any given day all through the year, whether that is a haircut, a scout or sport uniform, or a family counseling session. Sometimes it might just mean a special trip to get an ice cream cone that says "I love you and am here for you."

For these reasons, cash donations are most appreciated and will make a significant difference when it is needed most. Your gift can be made by phone at 618-213-8700, online at caritasfamilysolutions.org/ssyearround or using the enclosed envelope.

Gifts for under the Christmas tree will still be collected from church groups, organizations and businesses with whom we partner to provide a list of desired and needed items. Please call Samantha Lappe at 618-213-8717 or 877-722-2748 (toll free) or email Sam.Lappe@caritasfamily.org if you would like to coordinate a group gift collection this Christmas or at any time throughout the year.

We truly appreciate your past support and ask for your continued investment in our mission. Together, we can make a significant difference in the lives of so many, all year round.



REGIONAL OFFICES

Belleville

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

After November 1, 2018
321 S. 10th St.
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864



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!

SAVE the DATES!

DENIM & Diamonds DINNER 2018

Saturday, October 13
6:00 p.m.

The Pavilion, 1602 Sioux Dr., Marion, IL 62959

Buffet dinner, dessert and drinks
Silent and Live Auctions and Raffles
Entertainment by Club VIP DJ Services

\$55/person or \$100/couple

Dress up or dress in denim!

Call 618-213-8717 or
visit caritasfamilysolutions.org/denim for tickets
Proceeds help more than 500 children in foster care!

HEART & SOUL Annual Gala 2019



Saturday, February 9, 2019
6:00 p.m.

Four Points Sheraton
Fairview Heights, IL 62208

Cocktail Reception ~ Three Course Meal
Silent and Live Auctions ~ Raffles
Live Entertainment

\$99/person ~ Cocktail attire

Call 618-213-8717 or
visit caritasfamilysolutions.org/gala