

GOOD NEWS

Summer 2014

New Name Brings New Services Too

On January 1, 2014, the agency name changed from Christian Social Services of Illinois to **Caritas Family Solutions**. *Caritas* means “charity” or “love of neighbor”, and we feel that the name successfully describes what we do and how we serve. With a new name came a renewed energy as well as new “solutions” to community needs.

It’s an exciting time to be a part of these changes, as we begin to serve even more of the most vulnerable in our communities through two new programs to the agency:

Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) and Community Integrated Living Arrangements (CILAs).

MST is family and community-based treatment for juveniles with complex clinical, social, and educational problems. This therapy is offered to youth between the ages of 13 and 18 who are at high risk of commitment to the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice. Caritas counselors will help improve the lives of the teens by providing therapy in the home of the family and identifying the areas of need.

MST services are provided at our Regional Office in Carterville.

CILAs provide a residence for developmentally disabled persons to live a fulfilling and independent life. This new program will assist individuals with activities ranging from basic life skills to obtaining employment in the community. The first Caritas CILA home is under construction in Caseyville, to be completed in July 2014. It will provide a safe and loving home environment for four persons.

Stay tuned for future updates!



Gala 2014 an “Inspired” Success!

On Saturday, February 8th, more than 200 people attended our Mardi Gras-inspired inaugural charity gala at the Hilton Regency in O’Fallon, Illinois.

Andy Banker from Fox 2 News served as a very entertaining emcee. Lori Powell, who adopted a child through Caritas, spoke about her son’s struggles as a foster child before getting the help he needed through the agency. Lori emphasized how attention, guidance, and encouragement from our staff helped them become a forever family.

In addition to dinner and live and silent auctions, the program included a Fund-a-Need campaign, which attained support from more than a quarter of the attendees. Guests then danced the night away to hits of the ‘60s and ‘70s performed by *Galaxy*.

Gala 2014 raised over \$87,000, which will be used to benefit the more than 4,000 children and adults we serve each year.

“This was one of the largest and most successful events in our agency’s history,” said Gary Huelsmann, CEO. “It was very touching to see so many people come together to help support the individuals who are most in need in Southern Illinois.”

Many thanks to all the volunteers, staff, attendees, donors and sponsors for their support. We especially thank our Patron Sponsors: Gori Julian & Associates, P.C. and KPMG LLP; and our Donor Sponsors: Accenture, Jim’s Formal Wear, The Kilian Corporation, Platinum Technology Resource, Thompson Coburn, and The Wenzel Family. THANK YOU!





All Children Are Gifted; Some Just Open Their Package Sooner Than Others

A family with 13 children may seem like pure chaos to some, but to one mom, the sound of laughter, the chatter of children, and the constant activity are what makes a house a home. When Pamela and Charles Kukorola got married, they were already a blended family of six children, in which only three lived with them. However, the couple knew they wanted to grow their family and that adoption was the way to achieve their dream of more children. Mr. and Mrs. Kukorola wanted “a way to build our family and use God’s gifts and talents.”

Mrs. Kukorola said that when considering an adoption agency, they did research on many but decided to work with Caritas Family Solutions (formerly Christian Social Services) because they believe it is important how an agency values children, if the workers have integrity, and the overall perception and goals of the agency. Mrs. Kukorola reports that she has interacted with many outstanding caseworkers from Caritas and that the agency was very important in the adoption process.

The Kukorola family is not only a family of many children but also of many backgrounds. Four of the children in the home (two of whom are twins)

were adopted from Texas and are Hispanic, one child is bi-racial, and the last child they adopted is from China! Mrs. Kukorola explained that the children will grow up knowing their cultural heritage but she believes it is more important to help them develop their individuality, develop their courage to trust and try new things, and give them the love they need in order for them to become the people they were predestined to be.

The four children Mr. and Mrs. Kukorola adopted from Texas are all siblings and now have the ability to grow up in a loving environment. In addition, their seven-year-old son from China was born deaf. In order to acclimate him to the family and to the United States, the entire family took sign language for two years. However, all of the children feel at home and at peace with the Kukorola family because of the genuine love and support the family provides.

Pamela and Charles have adopted seven children through Caritas Family Solutions and they look at each as a true blessing. Mrs. Kukorola noted that the best thing about adoption is “bringing a family together.” The Kukorola home is one full of children, laughter, acceptance, and above all, love. Pamela said, “Never say never!” when asked about whether they will adopt again.



Simone Wheeler



Mark Cruse

Welcome to Our New Board Members

We recently welcomed two new members to the Board of Directors:

Simone Wheeler is a Senior Director at Touchette Regional Hospital in Centerville. She earned an MA from Webster University and an MS from SIUC and serves on our Planning and Program Development Committee. Simone lives in O'Fallon, Illinois with her husband and two daughters.

Mark Cruse is Marketing Coordinator at TheBank of Edwardsville. He holds a BA in Mass Communications and Journalism from Southeast Missouri State University and serves on our Public Relations and Resource Development Committee. Mark lives in Belleville, Illinois with his wife and three children.

John Hudspeth recently completed seven years of exemplary service on the Board of Directors, including a tenure as Vice Chairperson. **Fr. Ray Cook, OMI** was recently transferred to Rice University in Houston, TX after serving two years on the Board of Directors.

Anyone with a recommendation for a professional to serve on our Board of Directors is encouraged to contact Gary Huelsmann, CEO at 618-688-1126.

Introducing our new Chief Development Officer



Judith M. Blase Woodruff has been named Chief Development Officer (CDO) of Caritas Family Solutions. Judy will be responsible for the planning and implementation of our multi-faceted

development program to advance charitable giving to the agency. She will continue the efforts started by Sandy Haas, our former CDO who retired at the end of May.

Judy is a Southern Illinois native with three decades of fundraising and advancement experience, most

recently serving as Director of Corporate Relations for Lindenwood University. Prior to that, she was the Executive Director/Chief Development Officer for the National Foundation for Ectodermal Dysplasias, and she served as Director of Development for several area universities including Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Business. Her volunteer efforts have included Camp Ondessonk, where she was a camper, staff member, and now a volunteer. She served on the Camp's Board of Directors for nine years, serving as its president for four of those years. Welcome to Caritas, Judy!

Help Others While You Look for Help

Here's an easy way to raise money for Caritas: just start using Yahoo! powered **Goodsearch.com** as your internet search engine and they'll donate a penny to Caritas every time you do a search! If every person that receives this newsletter completed two searches a day on Goodsearch.com, we would raise \$44,000 dollars annually!

In addition, when you use their online shopping mall, Goodshop.com, where you can shop at more than 2,800 top online retailers, a percentage of your purchases will go to Caritas. You pay the same price as you normally would, but a donation goes to help the most vulnerable in your community!

Get started on their website, **www.goodsearch.com**, choose Caritas Family Solutions as your charity to support, and sign up through Facebook or with an email address. It's that simple!

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Simone Wheeler
Ella York

Chief Executive Officer
Gary Huelsmann, MSW



Fifth Annual Breakfast Benefit

The Regional Office in Belleville hosted its 5th Annual Benefit Breakfast on Saturday, January 18 at the Hecker Community Center. To celebrate the agency's transition to a new name and to mark the beginning of a new year, the theme for this year's breakfast was "New Beginnings." The event was a true celebration with 100+ attendees, a concert by the Valmeyer Community Choir, a testimonial from an adoptive family, a huge breakfast buffet, and \$4,000+ in donations!

Left: Regional Director Elke Hanson greets guests at the breakfast.

10th Annual Charity Brunch

Our Regional Office in Carterville hosted its 10th Annual Charity Brunch on March 22 at the Newman Center in Carbondale, IL. The event was free to attendees, who were treated to music from the Carbondale Community High School Choir, testimonials from a former foster child and an adoptive couple, and a delicious brunch buffet. More than 100 people donated over \$12,000 to help us serve children and families in the southern 13 counties of Illinois!

6th Annual "Tee Off for Kids' Sake" Charity Golf Scramble

The 6th Annual "Tee Off for Kids' Sake" Charity Golf Scramble hosted by the Regional Office in Mt. Vernon on April 25 was another resounding success, raising more than \$27,000! The addition of new sponsorship levels and complimentary t-shirts, combined with the most perfect weather in the event's history, made this year's scramble the best way to spend a Friday in Southern Illinois!

Right: Team Federated Auto took home the Best Dressed Award for the outfits they had custom made for this year's Golf Scramble.



Inaugural 1 Mile Family Walk/5K Run

Caritas celebrated National Foster Care Awareness Month by hosting the agency's Inaugural 1 Mile Family Walk/5K Run.

The event was held on May 17th at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville and featured a Zumba warm-up by *JoJo on the Go Fitness* to get the crowd moving.

Attendees enjoyed posing for photos with FredBird, the St. Louis Cardinal's mascot, as well as popcorn, snow cones, face painting, and DJ music before and after the walk/run. The top individual fundraiser won an iPad Mini, while the top fundraising team took home a prize package valued at \$500. Proceeds from the event will benefit the children and families Caritas serves throughout Southern Illinois. See more photos on our Facebook page!

A second event is planned for August in Carterville. More information is on the next page.



Left: Board Vice-Chair Matt Rakers (l) and CEO Gary Huelsmann (r) assist with the official ribbon cutting to start the walk/run.

Right: Runners alongside family walkers on the SIUE campus.



Be an Advocate for Those in Need

The Spring 2014 legislative session in the Illinois General Assembly left a lot of unfinished business on the table. Drastic budget cuts in Human Services were at stake. However, the needs of at-risk children and youth - as well as all other social services - were taken into consideration, and a "Middle of the Road" budget was finally passed on May 30, 2014.

This budget does include a very modest "cost-of-doing-business" increase to private agencies that provide child welfare services. However, it is feared that the funds will never filter all the way to the private agencies. It has become increasingly challenging to meet the needs of abused and neglected children without any increase in funding. Despite the fact that Caritas Family Solutions has only received one "cost-of-doing-business" increase in 12 years, we still manage to provide quality services to more individuals and families on an annual basis (mainly because of individual sacrifices on the part of our caring and giving staff.) For instance, in the last fiscal year, Caritas secured 229 forever

homes (including 94 adoptions and 21 guardianships) for children in foster care. Imagine what we could accomplish in Southern Illinois with more funding!

The current individual income tax rate in Illinois is 5%. However, this rate is scheduled to revert back to 3.75% on January 1, 2015. Without further action by the General Assembly, this will result in an estimated \$5 billion hole in the FY16 state budget and a genuine, unavoidable crisis for whoever is elected Governor in November. Human Services could once again be on the chopping block.

The November 2014 general elections will take place all across Illinois, including the 42 counties in which Caritas serves. It is very important for all of us to be informed of state representative candidates, what issues they represent, and how they can affect the funding to Caritas services. We urge you to get out and vote this election year and to remember the most vulnerable in your community.



1 Mile Family Walk/5K Run Saturday, August 16th 2014 at Walker's Bluff 14400 Meridian Road Carterville, IL 62918

Fun for all ages and fitness levels! Featuring a balloon artist, face painting, a Zumba warm-up, and live music by *South of 70*! The team captain with the most team members will win an iPad Mini! For a registration flyer and team captain form, please visit, www.caritasfamilysolutions.org.

Thank you to our current event sponsors*:
Paradise Pools and Spas in Carterville (Gold Level) and
Century 21 House of Realty, Inc. and Massie Dental (Bronze Level)

For more information on sponsorship opportunities, please contact
Ashlee D. Ritchie at 618-688-1162 or
Ashlee.Ritchie@caritasfamily.org.

** as of date of printing*

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*



Little Wishes...

We are always in need of items to help supplement our programs. If you would like to donate an item from the following lists, please call 800-997-9702.

St. John Bosco Children's Center (residential program for boys ages 6-12)

Toiletries (shampoo, conditioner, body wash, deodorant, etc.); Carpet squares; Socks and underwear; Linens (twin sheets, pillowcases, towels, wash cloths, etc.); Art materials (crayons, markers, glue sticks, construction paper, etc.)

Private Adoption Program

Phone cards, gas cards, & bus passes (given to birthparents while they're working with a birthparent counselor); Diapers, wipes, bottles, onesies, bibs, pacifiers, etc.; Monetary donations for purchases of informational materials

Counseling

New child-size table and chairs for Play room; Additional supplies for Play room – play dough, crayons, plain and colored paper, coloring pencils, etc.; Monetary donations for purchases of therapeutic materials for children and adults

CILA Program

Landscaping; BBQ grill; Outdoor swing/chairs; Patio set; Wheelchair van

General/All programs

Gift cards to stores like Target, Walmart, Kohl's; Bound notebooks (no spirals); Art supplies

Monetary donations can be made at any time via www.caritasfamilysolutions.org. THANK YOU!!!!

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

PROGRAM LOCATIONS

St. John Bosco Children's Center

900 Royal Heights Rd.
Ste. 1150
Belleville, IL 62226
618-688-1150

Fox River Assisted Living Center

1016 Parker St.
Olney, IL 62450
618-392-6168

Effingham

1901 South 4th St., Suite 222
Effingham, IL 62401
217-342-3970

Proud member of



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."