

lehigh Valley Families Together Inc.

annual report 2016-2017

Providing In-home Intervention, Reunification, Visit Coaching, Resource Family Care and Family Group Decision Making

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# Message from the CEO

Next year will be the 15th year of operation for Lehigh Valley Families Together. In looking ahead to that anniversary, I'd like to take this opportunity to review the mission for which our organization was created.  Having had many years of experience working with placement agencies, our founding team recognized that services designed to strengthen families could have a positive impact and reduce the need to have children placed in foster care. Removing children from their parents is absolutely necessary at times. But we believed keeping a child with their own family, while helping the parents improve their parenting skills, would be a goal that would produce positive results. In addition, working with families to create an appropriate environment for their children to return to reduces the time away from home and mitigates the negative impact of being separated from their family. Embracing these two assumptions led us to develop our in-home services and reunification programs which remain the foundation for all of our services.

The annual report for 2016-2017 follows the familiar format of including organizations that have collaborated with ours to help serve and support the families with whom we worked during the year. We have included the numbers of families and children served in the statistics provided.  In addition, we share some stories of families that have been successful in addressing their issues, which helps to highlight the impact of our services.

As always, we are grateful for our partnership with Lehigh and Northampton Counties and the collaboration that has developed over the years.

Sincerely,

Steve Brong, President/ CEO

# Community Linkages

During the year, Lehigh Valley Families Together has worked with the following community agencies, linking our families with these nearby resources in order to facilitate supportive connections.

**Food Banks**

* Allentown Area Ecumenical Food Bank
* Catholic Charities
* Easton Area Neighborhood Center
* Lehigh County Conference of Churches
* New Bethany Ministries
* Northampton Area Food Bank
* Pathways
* Project of Easton
* Salvation Army
* Second Harvest
* Jewish Family Services



**Day Care/Education/Employment**

* Allied Personnel Services
* Backyard Treehouse
* Big Brother Big Sister of the Lehigh Valley
* Boys and Girls Club – Allentown
* Bright Hope – Easton
* Care Net
* CareerLink
* CASA Guadalupe
* Colonial Intermediate Unit
* Crayola
* Creative Minds
* Early HeadStart
* Early Intervention
* Education Law Center
* Good Shepherd
* Head Start
* JobConnection Services
* Labor Ready
* Lehigh Carbon Community College
* Lehigh Carbon Intermediate Units 20 & 21
* Lehigh Valley Child Care Center
* Local School Districts
* Northampton Community College
* Perfect Fit
* Petite Scholars Learning Center
* Project Peak (through Lehigh University)
* Project of Easton – Fowler Literacy Center
* Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)
* St. Margaret’s School
* Safe Start
* Sonia’s Little Angels Daycare
* Staffmark
* YMCA Pre-K Counts Program

**Supplies and Housing Assistance**

* Allentown Housing Authority
* Bethlehem Housing Authority
* Catholic Charities
* Center for Independent Living
* Easton Area Neighborhood Center
* Easton Housing Authority
* Hispanic American Organization
* Lehigh County Conference of Churches
* Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot
* Life Choices
* LIHEAP
* Mary’s Shelter - Cay Galgon Center
* Met-Ed
* New Bethany Ministries-Restoration Housing Apartments
* Northampton County Housing Authority
* PA Department of Public Welfare
* Pathways
* Pinebrook Family Answers Reentry Program
* PPL “On Track”
* PPL Wrap Program
* Program for Women and Families
* Project of Easton
* Salvation Army
* Turning Point
* UGI
* Valley Housing Development Corporation
* WIC

**Miscellaneous**

* ARC
* Allentown Public Library
* Bethlehem Public Library
* Boys and Girls Club
* Boy and Girl Scouts
* CASA
* CCIS – Title XX Office
* Children’s Home of Easton
* Children’s Home of Reading
* Community Action Committee of Lehigh Valley
* Community Service Foundation
* Concern
* Craig’s List
* Crime Victims Council
* Diakon
* Domestic Relations
* Easton Public Library
* Fund to Benefit Children & Youth. Inc.
* Justice Works
* Lehigh County Adult Probation & Parole
* Lehigh County Court of Common Pleas
* Lehigh County Family Court
* Lehigh County PFA Office
* Lehigh County Walk-in Bench Warrant
* Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce
* Magisterial District Court 3rd District (Cherryville)
* Metro Plus
* Mustard Seed Clothing Ministry
* North Penn Legal Services
* Northampton & Lehigh County Custody Offices
* Northampton County Assistance Office
* Northampton County Court of Common Pleas
* Northampton County Juvenile Court
* Northampton County PFA Office
* Northampton County Prison
* Northampton County Probation Office
* Outreach Depot
* PA Department of Human Services
* PennDot
* Project Child
* Public Defender’s Office of Lehigh County
* SafeLink Cell Phone Service
* Social Security Administration
* Valley Youth House – Truancy Intervention Program
* Ways to Work Program
* Wegmans
* Wells Fargo Bank
* YMCA
* Youth Advocate Program

**Counseling**

* A Chip
* Access Services
* Berks Counseling Center
* Bet-El Counseling Services
* Bethlehem Counseling Services
* Care Net
* Cedar Point
* Community Care Behavioral Health
* Concern
* Confront
* Crime Victims Council
* Dr. Ron Esteve
* Dr. Veronique Valliere
* Drug & Alcohol Intake, Lehigh and Northampton Counties
* Forensic Treatment Services
* Glenn R. Koch & Associates
* Haven House Behavioral Health Services
* Hispanic American Organization
* Holcomb Behavioral Health
* Joanne Ngito – Play Therapy
* Katie Coughlin & Associates
* KidsPeace
* LVPG - Macungie
* Lehigh Valley Community Mental Health
* Lehigh Valley Family Health Center
* Life Guidance
* Magellan Behavioral Health
* Marjorie Reagan
* Methodist Services
* New Directions Treatment Services
* Northampton County MH/MR
* Northeast Treatment Services
* Northwestern Human Services
* Omni Health Services
* PA Mentor
* Pinebrook Family Services
* Progressions
* Reading Specialists
* Recovery Revolution
* ReDCo Group
* St. Luke’s Behavioral Health
* Step by Step
* Turning Point – Domestic Violence Counseling
* United Health AARP
* Valley Youth House
* Warwick Family Services

**Shelters and Housing**

* 3rd Street Alliance for Women & Children
* 6th Street Shelter
* Allentown Rescue Mission
* American Red Cross
* Bucks County Prison
* Mary’s Shelter - Cay Galgon Center
* Hamilton Services Group Inc.
* Mary’s Shelter
* New Bethany Ministries
* Northampton & Lehigh County Prison
* Pathways
* Roof Over Family Shelter
* Safe Harbor
* Salisbury House-Behavioral Health
* Salvation Army Hospitality House
* Section 8 Program
* Step by Step
* Turner Street Apartments
* Turning Point
* Valley Youth House Shelter

**Health and Medical**

* Allentown Health Bureau
* AmeriHealth Caritas
* AmeriHealth Mercy
* Autism Support Group
* CHIP
* CHOP
* Children’s Dental Association
* D & A Intake
* Dental Dreams
* Easton Hospital
* Eyeland
* Forensic Treatment Specialists
* Gateway
* Geisinger Medical Center
* Good Shepherd
* Kidscare Union Station in Easton
* Kidspeace Hospital
* Lehigh Valley Hospital Network
* Metro Plus
* New Directions
* Outpatient Pediatrics-LVH
* PA Department of Public Welfare
* Path Nurse
* Planned Parenthood
* Pyramid Drug & Alcohol
* Quest Diagnostics
* St. Christopher’s Children’s Hospital
* St. Luke’s Dental Van
* St. Luke’s Family Practice Center
* St. Luke’s Hospital
* Sacred Heart Hospital
* SASSI
* Smile Krafters
* Visiting Nurses Association
* Vital Records
* White Deer Run

# Family Stories

## Whitley Family Reunion

LVFT’s involvement with the Whitley family began after the parents, Teddy and Tanya, were released from incarceration. The couple had been arrested and jailed for retail theft and drug possession. On top of their criminal history, they also battled drug addiction over the course of a number of years. After approximately a year in prison, the couple came out with a new mindset, a mindset centered on keeping their family together. That family included six children: Mario, Alec, Carlton, Austin, Amanda, and Ashtyn. The children ranged in age from 3 years to 14 years old. At the time of their release, the six children were in foster care, split between two different foster homes and attending school in two different school districts.

In order for the Whitley’s to fulfill their ultimate dream of reunification, they had to start from square one. Teddy and Tanya were both living in separate homeless shelters. The couple had no means of income, no means of transportation, and they needed to address their drug addiction. Our team discussed with them how important sobriety was to the reunification process, and frequently provided transportation so the couple could receive the treatment they needed. Teddy began attending any and all NA (Narcotics Anonymous) meetings, and Tanya was receiving methadone treatment on top of attending meetings. We searched extensively with both parents for employment and provided transportation to multiple job interviews. We also spent countless hours driving the pair around the city looking for “For Rent” signs in windows and calling the numbers listed below the signs.

From the beginning, Teddy and Tanya had a very open and honest approach in developing a relationship with us. This allowed us to create a therapeutic bond with the family that encouraged them to confide in us at all times. It was their easygoing, positive attitude that kept the family going when obstacles appeared to fall in their way. Additionally, it was through their perseverance that both were able to find employment, and both were promoted in their jobs not long after starting work. With a stable income came a means to acquire housing. We were able to assist the Whitley family in acquiring a 5-bedroom home, which was fully furnished by members of their church. Both Teddy and Tanya continued to attend weekly meetings far beyond the time requirement of their programs because they saw addiction as a lifelong battle.

When we left the Whitley family, all their children were living in their parents’ new, 5-bedroom home, and they were all attending the same school district. Both Teddy and Tanya received yet another promotion at their respective places of work. Tanya was saving up to buy a vehicle, and the couple continued to attend NA meetings regularly.

## chad

Chad, age 16, came into care with his younger brother from another foster care agency where supervision was described as too loose. There is a fine line between Reasonable and Prudent Parenting regulations and structuring teenagers’ time more carefully; and the county team for these children thought they needed more. The boys were placed with an LVFT foster home with two parents and other biological children close in age to Chad and his brother.

The foster parents in this case are easy going but dedicated. They explained to Chad that there would be house rules and County guidelines for him to follow, and that they would support him to the fullest. It was made clear that, due to his age, he would be allowed extra privileges as long as he respected the guidelines. For example, he could visit with his friends and family as long as schoolwork was maintained and he came home by curfew. This worked well and Chad fell into a nice routine. In addition, he independently found employment at a local restaurant and started saving money toward a summer vacation at the beach with friends.

Although Chad’s parents are close by, neither has followed through with reunification efforts during the years that the boys were in placement. His mother has had liberal visitation rights and maintained regular contact with Chad. Chad had an Independent Living worker from Valley Youth House who assisted him weekly and the foster parents also prepared Chad to live independently. After a brief period of “Senioritis,” Chad successfully graduated from William Allen High School. He applied to several colleges and universities and was accepted by Kutztown.

Following a fun beach trip, funded by his work efforts, Chad prepared for and left for college in August. His mother and foster parents supported his transition. He took a gift card and many school supplies donated by St. Luke’s Nursing School as well as the well-wishes from all those who have known and admired him.

## Roberts

Lehigh Valley Families Together met the Roberts family in the Spring of 2016 at the most critical and tumultuous time for the family. Sa'rai, was a single mother of seven when the family became involved with Lehigh County Children and Youth Services. Porsha, Sa'rai's, thirteen-year-old daughter, was in a really difficult time in her life. She was engaging in risky sexual behavior as well as self-injurious behavior that was negatively impacting the entire family. Additionally, Porsha's exposure to sexual and physical abuse at the hands of a family member (not in the household), was impacting her daily life both at home and in school. As a result of these behaviors, Porsha was removed from the home and placed in a therapeutic foster home.

Our team worked with Sa'rai for a year. In that time, we assisted her in establishing therapy for Porsha and her siblings, helped in finding them a bigger and better home, provided parenting education and life skills to assist Sa'rai in accomplishing all family oriented goals, and ultimately helped Sa'rai and Porsha improve their relationship. After quite some time of working on their relationship, both Sa'rai and Porsha became closer, developed better communication, and established love and respect for one another that really changed and improved the family dynamic overall.

As a mother, Sa'rai grew greatly and as an individual she began to accomplish goals that she forgotten about. With our assistance, she enrolled in college again, and began to study Psychology. Her goal of going back to college was met and she excelled both academically and personally. Her children saw the steps and actions she was taking to better their lives and were incredibly proud and inspired by their mother. With our assistance, Porsha was reunited with her mother and siblings. We kept working with the Roberts family to ensure they continued to do well as a family. Rather quickly, it was clear that the family had been empowered and given the tools to be successful. Today, they are thriving.  Porsha and Sa'rai maintain a close relationship, and Porsha is an outstanding and involved high school student.

# Statement of Financial Position

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **June 30,** |
|  | **2017** |  | **2016** |
| **ASSETS** |  |  |  |
| Cash | $334,460 |  | $328,493 |
| Accounts receivable | 57,518 |  | 67,051 |
| Prepaid expenses | 12,420 |  | 15,165 |
| Security deposit | 1,200 |  | 1,200 |
| Property and equipment, net | 8,603 |  | 10,502 |
| Total Assets | $414,201 |  | $422,411 |
| **LIABILITIES** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Accounts payable |  |  | $4,646 |  | $13,141 |
| Accrued expenses |  |  | 29,463 |  | 27,024 |
| Total Assets |  |  | $34,109 |  | $40,165 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **NET ASSETS - UNRESTRICTED** |  |  | 380,092 |  | 382,246 |
| Total Liabilities and Net Assets |  |  | $414,201 |  | $422,411 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  | **June 30,** |
|  | **2017** |  | **2016** |
| **REVENUE** |  |  |  |
| Program Fees |  |  |  |
| Lehigh County | $263,385 |  | $199,023 |
| Northampton County | 489,801 |  | 713,239 |
| Total Program Fees | $753,186 |  | $912,262 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Miscellaneous revenue | 457 |  | 3,716 |
| Interest | 99 |  | 107 |
| Total Revenue | 753,742 |  | 916,085 |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Expenses** |  |  |  |
| Program services | 680,428 |  | 830,097 |
| Management and general | 75,468 |  | 85,171 |
| Total Expenses | 755,896 |  | 915,268 |
| **CHANGES IN NET ASSETS** | (2,154) |  |  817 |
| **UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS, JULY 1** | 382,246 |  | 381,429 |
| **UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS, JUNE 30** | $380,092 |  | $382,246 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Years Ended** |
|  | **June 30,** |
|  | **2017** |  | **2016** |
| **CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES** |  |  |  |
| Cash received from program services | $763,176 |  | $935,396 |
| Cash received from interest income | 99 |  | 107 |
| Cash paid to suppliers and employees | (755,144) |  | (901,042) |
| Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities | $8,131 |  | 34,461 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES** |  |  |  |
| Purchases of equipment | (2,164) |  | 0 |
| Net Cash Used in Financing Activities | (2,164) |  | 0 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **NET INCREASE IN CASH** | 5,967 |  | 34,461 |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CASH, JULY 1** |  | 328,493 |  | 294,032 |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CASH, JUNE 30** | 334,460 |  | 328,493 |

**RECONCILIATION OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS**

**TO NET CASH PROVIDED PROVIDED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CHANGES IN NET ASSETS** | (2,154) |  | $817 |
| **RECONCILIATIONOF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS TO** **NET CASH PROVIDED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES** |  |  |  |
| Depreciation | 4,063 |  |  4,173 |
| Changes in operating assets and liabilities |  |  |  |
| Decrease (increase) in accounts receivable | 9,533 |  |  19,418 |
| Increase in prepaid expenses | 2,745 |  |  (2,109) |
| (Decrease) increase in accounts payable | (8,495) |  |  7,311 |
| Increase in accrued expenses | 2,439 |  |  4,851 |
| NET CASH PROVIDED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES | $8,131 |  | $34,461 |

# Statistics

Families Served during Fiscal Year 2016-2017

Northampton County – 69 Families

Lehigh County – 68 Families

From July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 Lehigh Valley Families Together worked with 137 families. Of these 103 were discharged. The average length of involvement was 5.25 months.

Sixty-three families had a preservation focus and 40 were reunification. Of the discharged preservation families, 44 were successful in keeping their children at home, representing a 70% were success rate. Of the discharged reunification families, 16 were successful in reuniting with their children, a 40% success rate.

Twenty-two children were placed in our foster care program. Eight remain in care. Of the remaining children, nine returned home, two were adopted by Lehigh Valley Families Together foster parents, two transitioned to another agency and one was hospitalized for mental health issues.

We had six families referred for Family Group Decision Making. All but one had successful conferences.

We provided Visit Coaching for four families during this time period.

# Company Information

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