



**familyconnections**  
Counseling resources with *family* in mind



# **annual report**

## **2014-2015**

## Report from the Executive Director

I have come to realize that there is no such thing as a year that does not have its unique challenges. At the same time, we also are blessed with opportunities that remind us what a privilege it is to work with children and families.

Challenges began July 1, 2014 with the updated Medicaid manual, which affected the provision of some services, mostly in the area of service limits, documentation, and credentialing of staff. The Medicaid expansion program slowly rolled out and toward the end of the fiscal year, the State established agreements with 4 independent managed care companies (Beacon, Aetna, Unicare, and HealthPlan) to oversee Medicaid reimbursed behavioral health services. The latter part of the fiscal year was spent reading and negotiating contracts and trying to determine the impact that this change will have on our clients and our operations. Concurrent with the managed care changes, the Safe-At-Home initiative was introduced by WVDHHR Secretary Karen Bowling and the Commission of the Bureau for Children and Families Nancy Exline. Safe-At-Home aims to keep more youths in their homes and communities and reduce the dependence on residential treatment facilities. The goal is a 40% reduction in the number of children in out-of-home placement by 2020. The challenge for all residential treatment facilities is to redefine what out-of-home treatment looks like and keep it relevant to the needs of children and families in this changing environment.

Challenges being what they are, there is considerable pleasure in rising to meet

them. Family Connections successfully realized 85% of the executive objectives on the 2014-15 short-term plan; 90% of the policy, personnel, and practice objectives; 81% of the financial objectives and; 71% of the facilities and safety objectives. The effort of all responsible parties must be recognized, because everyone has a role: teacher-counselors; therapists; support staff; administration and; the board of directors.



Pictured: Board member Zach Stewart and Auxiliary member Linda Howell at the July 2014 Car Show

Clinic referrals remained steady, and the Office of Health Facility Licensure and Certification (OHFLAC) survey conducted in April had a positive outcome with the outpatient program being licensed until August 31, 2017. The clinic's professional counselors provide theory-based counseling to children, adolescents, and adults with an eye to the family impact of counseling and the importance of trauma-informed assessment and intervention. In the annual satisfaction survey, consumers gave the clinic (services and staff) high marks and overwhelmingly agreed they would recommend Family Connections to others and return if the need arose.

Brooke Place had a licensing survey in March, this one by the Bureau of Children and Families. The outcome was also positive, and a full regular license was renewed for two more years. Regarding the licensing surveys, the executive director was out of town on both occasions and is particularly proud that other administrative, support, and frontline staff managed it all without missing a beat.

Brooke Place is in its second year of a community mentoring life skills program. The girls participate in a variety of learning activities including cooking, sewing (they made pillowcases as part of the Amazing Grace project to be distributed in nursing homes and children's hospitals), changing oil, potting, refinishing furniture, and safety in the kitchen. Educationally, the girls performed well in school, with three out of three seniors graduating, and even though school attendance (the lack of it) is on the problem list of many girls at intake, going to school is such an expectation that not a single girl challenged it. Even better, every girl discharged from Brooke Place during the fiscal year had better than a 2.0 gpa. Also, 100% of the girls with a planned discharge returned to a family member or transitioned to independent living.

There is a federal push for what is being called normalcy in foster care. It's about time, is what we say. Brooke Place has always advocated for the girls to have the same opportunities that teenagers typically have in their homes and communities. To this end, eligible girls were permitted to have jobs (e.g. summer work program, McDonald's, Subway), attend homecoming and the prom, participate in afterschool activities (one enterprising resident started a book club at Brooke High), and join

community events (one girl ran in a 5K charity race). Brooke Place also offers recreational and educational activities – sometimes both at once – that include visiting new places (PNC Park and Blennerhasset Island) and revisiting favorites (Kennywood and Sandcastle).



Teacher Counselor Kim Neeley encouraging residents to wiggle their toes in the mud and the muck for a complete nature experience.

Family Connections continues to maintain its membership with the West Virginia Child Care Association (WVCCA), which keeps us in the loop on federal and state legislation that can impact the residential treatment field. The WVCCA has resources available through its website and remains a marketing tool for members. The level of expertise and the wealth of experience of the membership is a benefit many times over for Family Connections. At the root of all WVCCA work is advocacy for children and families. The association sponsored a legislative event in January, and earlier in the fiscal year, they sponsored a *Be the One* Day to honor the dedication of direct service workers across the state and highlight accomplishments of community leaders. Family Connections' winner at the September 2014 event was Deborah Brush, a shift leader at Brooke Place with 5 years of experience. She was nominated by her coworkers; the residents were eager to

share what they appreciated about her (most especially her pithy sayings).



Pictured L to R: Shift Leaders, Ashley Boyce, Deborah Brush, and Marisa Shreve

Family Connections has representation locally through the Family Ways Collaborative, the Regional Summit, and the Family Resource Network. The development assistant has been a voice for the agency at 3 different Chambers of Commerce: Weirton, Wellsburg, and Follansbee. These are also opportunities for educating the community about the activities of the agency.

Family Connections became a United Way agency this year and received an allocation for the clinic to purchase workbooks, assessments, and service records. The agency participated in the *Chair-ity* fundraiser in June, joining other organizations in submitting a decorated chair to be part of the silent auction. Our development assistant inspired this chair, which she outfitted with the help of the girls and one of the community life skills mentors. It was a big hit at the event.



Development Assistant Jean Bartholow in her wheels pushing the wheels she inspired.

Hancock County Savings Bank, a long-time supporter of Family Connections, was the primary sponsor for the "There's No Place Like Home" annual dinner/dance.



Pictured L to R: Board member and COO at HCSB Melissa Kell, FC Fiscal Director Barbara Jones, and HCSB CEO Catherine Ferrari

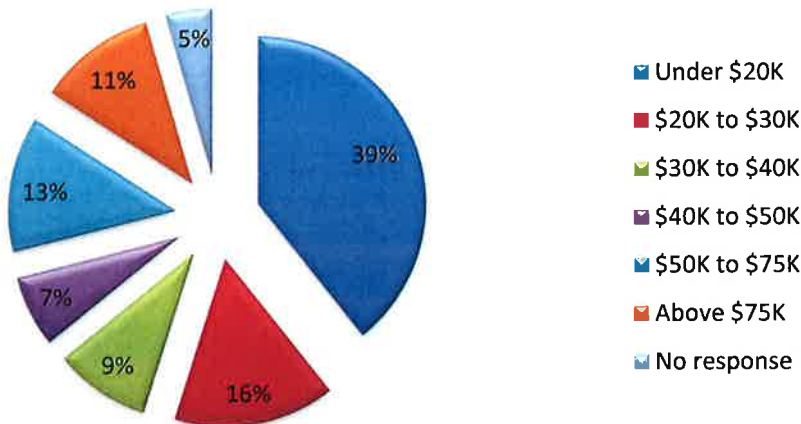


On a sad note, on May 21<sup>st</sup> we said farewell to a beloved board member, Cathy Sobel, who dedicated countless hours to the mission of Family Connections and the well-being of the girls at Brooke Place. Her outstanding contribution to the lives of children was recognized by the WVCCA when she was named the Champion of Children in 2012. It was hard to catch her not smiling.

# Outpatient Clinic

There were 379 clinic referrals (an increase from the previous year - 340) during the past fiscal year with 290 charts being opened compared to 264 in 2013-14. The no show/withdrawal rate was 20% (compared to 15% the previous year).

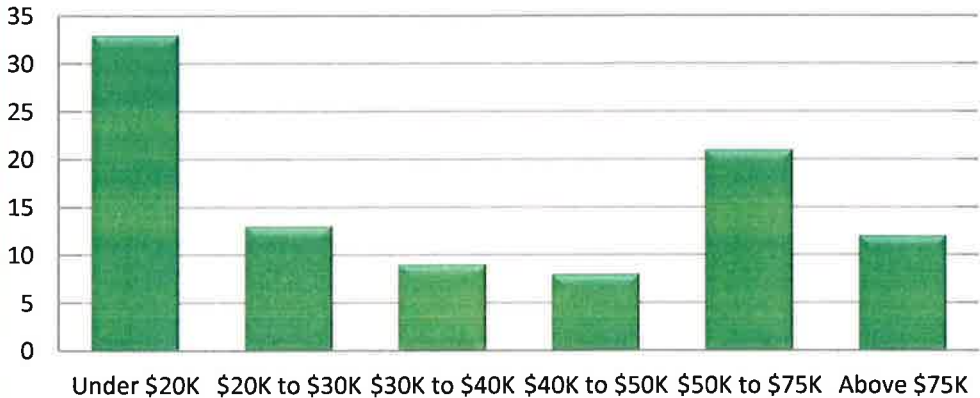
## Family Income 2014-15



The income chart to the left is representative of new admissions in this year. At a glance, you can see that more than half of our clinic clients are reporting incomes below \$40,000. As we see year after year, there is no getting around the fact that money matters impact family matters.

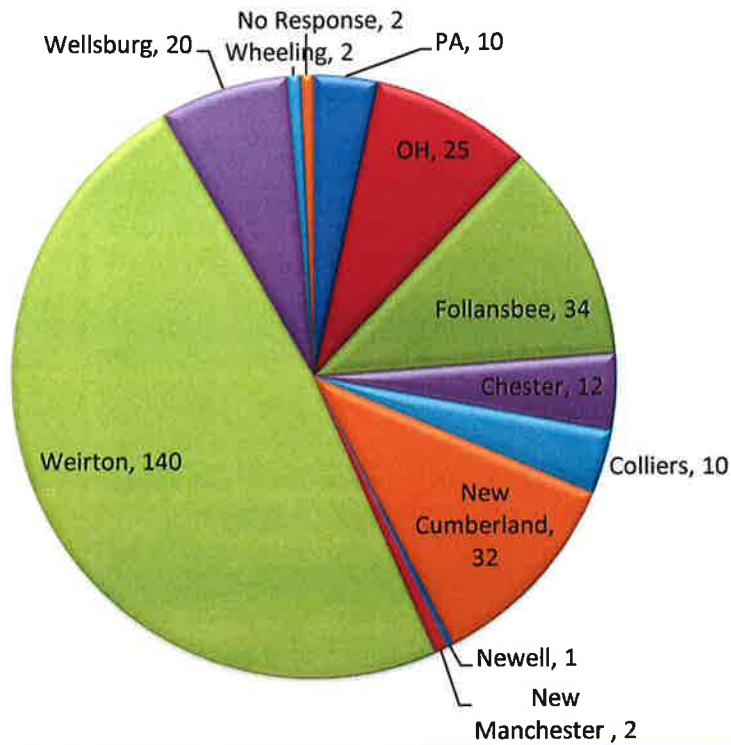
Approximately 33% of the new clients participating in counseling are members of families with 4 or more dependents. Note that the largest category consists of families with less than \$20,000 in income.

## 2014-15 Snapshot of Income for Families with 4 or more Dependents



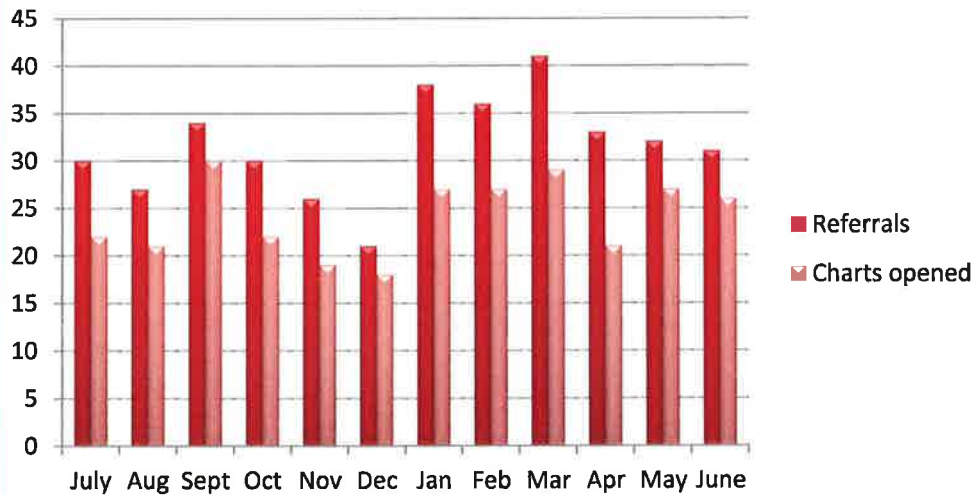
The 2014 Federal Poverty Guidelines indicate that a family with 4 dependents is considered to be living in poverty if their income is at or below \$23,850; 5 dependents: \$27,910; 6 dependents: \$31,970; 7 dependents: \$36,030.

## Consumers come from...2014-15

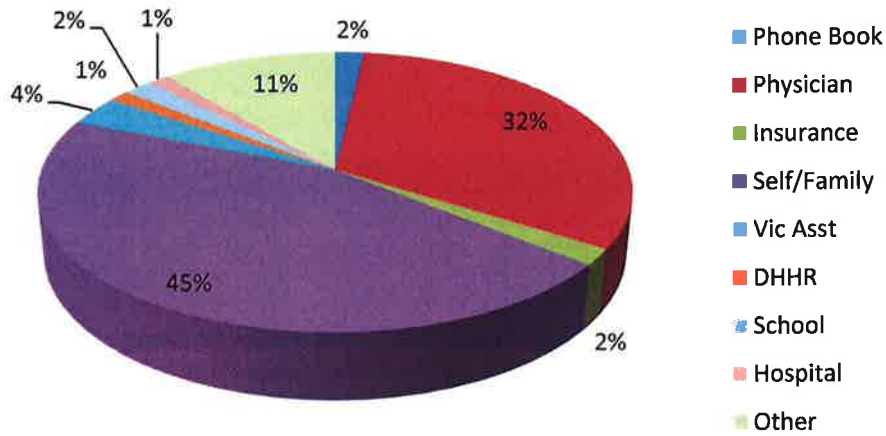


**Above:** This year 140 out of 290 new clients at the clinic come from Weirton (48%), which is the same as last year. Referrals from Brooke and Hancock Counties outside of Weirton account for 38%. Referrals from Ohio (state) account for 8%. Because the clinic does not accept the Ohio medical card, these clients all carry private insurance. **Below:** This chart compares the number of referrals to the number of openings. Many people, once they make the referral, feel better, so they don't follow through with keeping that first appointment.

## Referrals and Chart Openings 2014-15

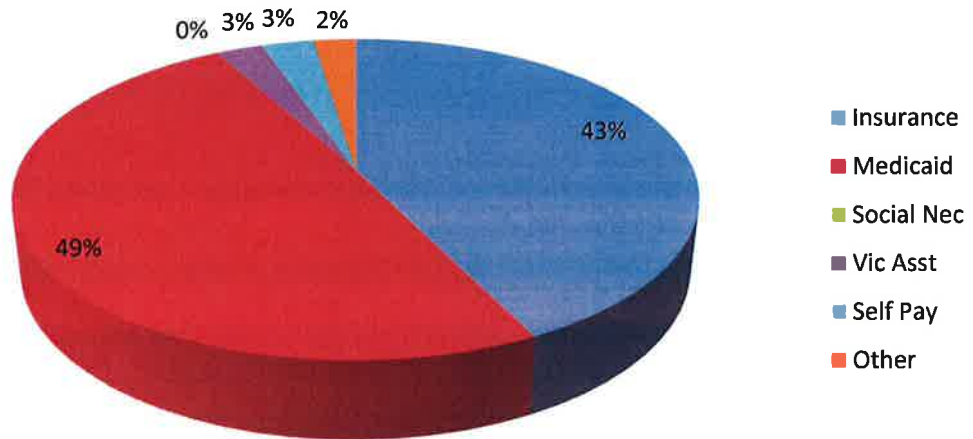


## Where do referrals come from? 2014-15



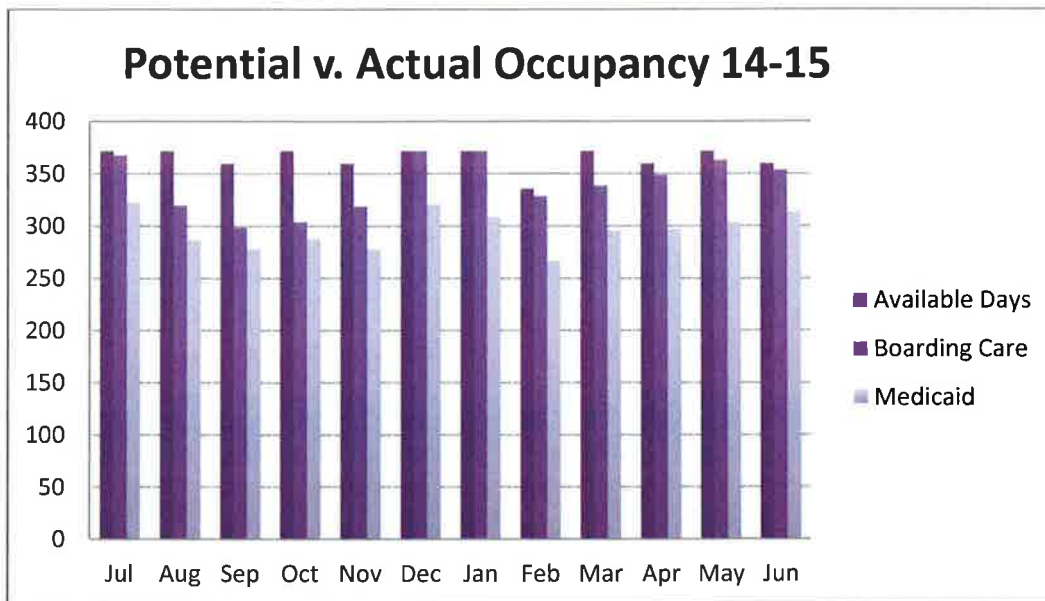
Family Connections has a solid referral base with 45% of the referrals coming by “word of mouth” and another 32% being physician-driven referrals. The phone book, which is a cost, accounts for only 2% of referrals.

## Who's Paying? 2014-15

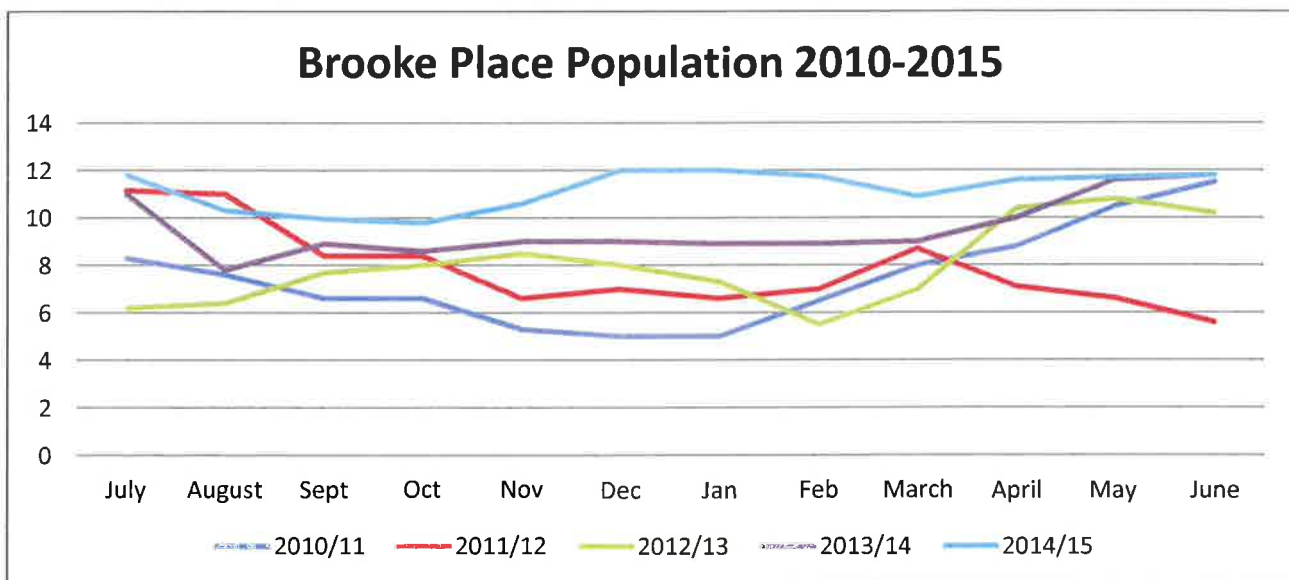


At the Weirton Clinic, the majority of consumers have privately held insurance.

# Brooke Place



**Above:** The potential occupancy of the group home is measured in bed days, i.e., the number of days in the month multiplied by the bed capacity of the group home, in this case 12. Boarding care represents the number of beds days that were actually invoiced to the Bureau of Children and Families, in other words, the number of days that beds were actually occupied by residents. Medicaid is the number of treatment days that were invoiced to the Bureau of Medical Services. Ideally, the boarding care and treatment days should be close, but they will never be equal because treatment days are not counted when residents are on home visits or in the hospital. As the chart indicates, December and January were the months with the highest population. (Last 2 years it was May.) The Brooke Place director has done an outstanding job of nurturing relationships with DHHR referral sources and this has impacted the population. The target Brooke Place was shooting for is at least 92% occupancy for the year. We hit 93.3%! **Below:** Occupancy over the last 5 years.





# Fund Development

## I. 2014-2015 FUND DEVELOPMENT GOALS

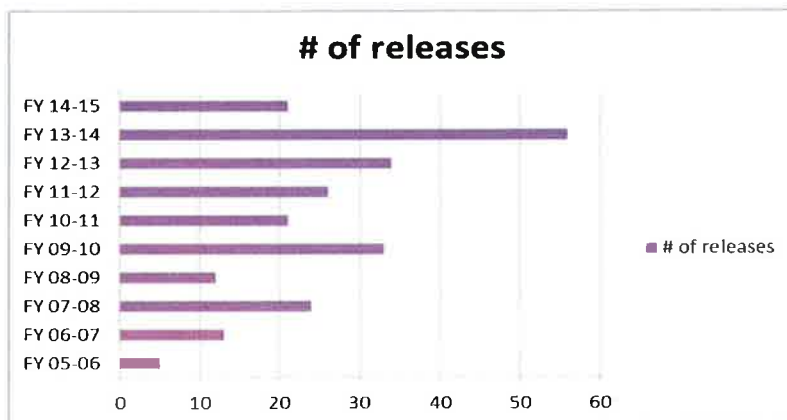
### Goal 1: Continue the newsletter with at least 3 issues per year.

This goal was met.

#### Comments:

The newsletter was mailed in August and December 2014 and in March and June 2015 to over 571 recipients. Even though the newsletter comes with some cost, it is felt that the benefit of keeping the newsletter out in the community on a regular basis is worth the expense. The development assistant began building email addresses for DHHR contacts, probation officers, parents, guardians and relatives of residents in order to receive email newsletters. The June 2015 newsletter was emailed to all of the above. A monthly Brooke Place newsletter was also added. The purpose was to update the residents' approved contacts with happenings at Brooke Place. The newsletter continues to be added to the Family Connections' web site.

### Goal 2: Continue to market the agency in new arenas.



Local papers published 21 press releases.

Auxiliary members created a quilt that raised \$500.00 in a raffle.

Eighth annual fund raiser "There's No Place Like Home".

Local businesses purchased ads in the dance program.

Giving envelopes were placed on the tables at the dance generating donations.

Family Connections also held its first annual Car/Bike Show with proceeds totaling \$1,620.16.

This goal was partially met.

#### Comments:

The organization continues to stay active with the Weirton and Follansbee Area Chamber of Commerce. Staff attended Ladies Day. Several auxiliary and board members attended Leads to Success, Business after hours, the Follansbee Chamber Christmas dinner honoring Senator Manchin and the wine and dine event at Williams Country Club. Family Connections assisted serving at a Follansbee Chamber fundraiser and designed a "Chair-ity for a silent auction for the Weirton United Way. Attendance at the Wellsburg Chambers continues to be sporadic due to infrequent meetings being held.

**Goal 3: Continue board development to foster recognition of their active role in the community as a Family Connections board member.**

This goal was partially met.

**Comments:**

Some board members attended the Weirton Chamber’s Business after Hours, Leads to Success breakfasts, assisted with the dance, worked at the Car Show, and gave the “elevator speeches” when the opportunity was present. We were fortunate to have one board member attend a Weirton United Way event that met our obligation for participation. The 2015-16 plan challenges the board to increase their involvement in these community activities.

The board continues to recruit members with an eye toward connectedness in the business community, so marketing and fund development efforts take on a higher priority.

**Goal 4: Increase/rebuild committee and auxiliary membership with community and board.**

This goal was met.

**Comments:**

The auxiliary increased in size and add a couple of new policies and procedures to bring on new members. In spite of the size, a few core members tend to do the bulk of the work.

**Goal 5: Cultivate a relationship with loyal donors through a recognition program.**

This goal was not met.

A picnic was held September 2014 at Brooke Hills Park to recognize our loyal donors. Approximately fifty five individuals, mostly members of the Auxiliary and Board, their families, residents and staff attended.

**Goal 6: Maintain the investment account.**

This goal was met. Andy McKenzie, the fund manager of the Wells Fargo account presented information to the board on the account and offered suggestions for future investment strategies.

**Other Efforts:**

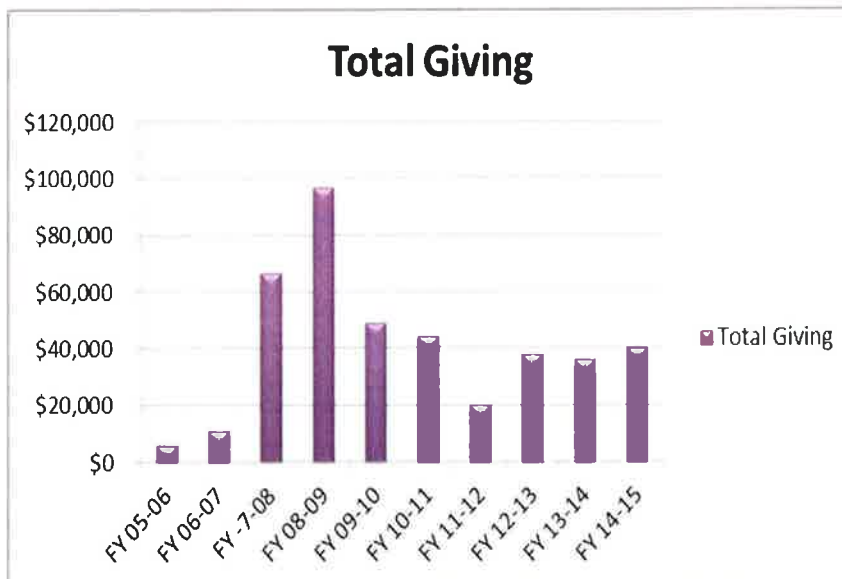
- Arcelor Mittal again purchased over \$2,700 worth of Christmas gifts for the residents at Brooke Place and donated \$500 toward the purchase of lawn equipment.
- Applications to the Ohio Valley and Weirton United Ways were submitted. The Weirton United Way allocated \$3,000 to the clinic.
- Grants submitted to the Community Foundation of the Ohio Valley, the Women’s Giving Circle, and Hancock County Savings Bank Foundation were turned down.

## II. ANNUAL FUNDRAISING EVENT: "THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME"



## III. DONATION REPORT

2013-2014	2014-2015
Total: \$36,307.71	Total: \$40,364.23
Honor/memorials: \$ 515.00	Honor/memorials: \$1,795.00
In kind: \$12,114.55	In kind: \$14,673.06
Cash: \$23,678.16	Cash: \$ 23,896.17

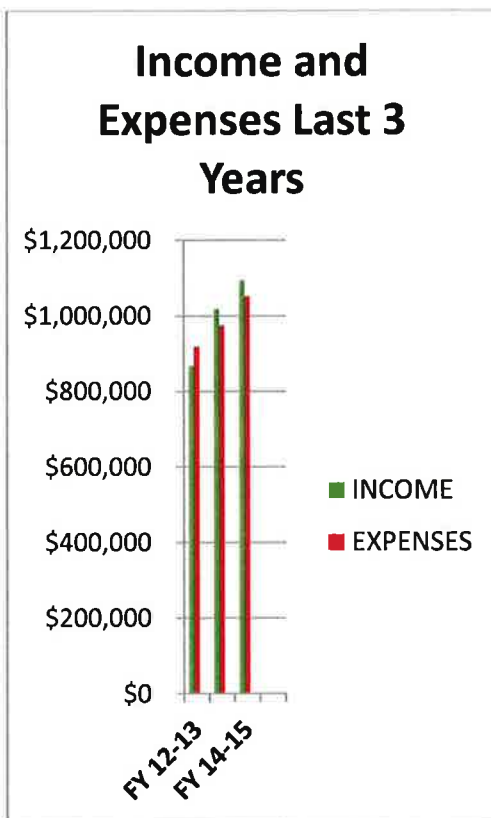


The 2014-2015 goal to increase giving by 10% (cash donations) was not met.

## Report from the Fiscal Director

Family Connections saw one of its best fiscal years in terms of financial stability. There were a number of contributing factors: the population at the group home was at or near capacity; the clinic referrals were constant and kept the two full time contract therapists busy; and the fund development committee held two successful fund raisers. This past year also saw Family Connections being accepted by the Weirton United Way as a member agency and allocated \$3,000 to help offset clinical care expenses at the clinic.

The following graph shows the financial progress over the last three years.



There were five short term financial goals with 31 objectives to attain these goals. The organization was able to meet 84% of these goals. This was another successful year for moving towards the accomplishment of the 3 long term goals.

The budget for fiscal year 2014-15 increased by 9% because it included the continuation of the 3% cost of living increase and bonuses for all employees, quarterly appreciation activities for staff, and environmental updates to group home. The maintenance and cook positions were increased to full time hours. The maintenance person has taken over the grass cutting and handles everyday maintenance issues on a timelier basis. As the facility ages, it becomes helpful to have these things taken care of as they occur. The provider of employee health care did not change, employee contributions remained the same, and the agency continues to reimburse employee deductibles.

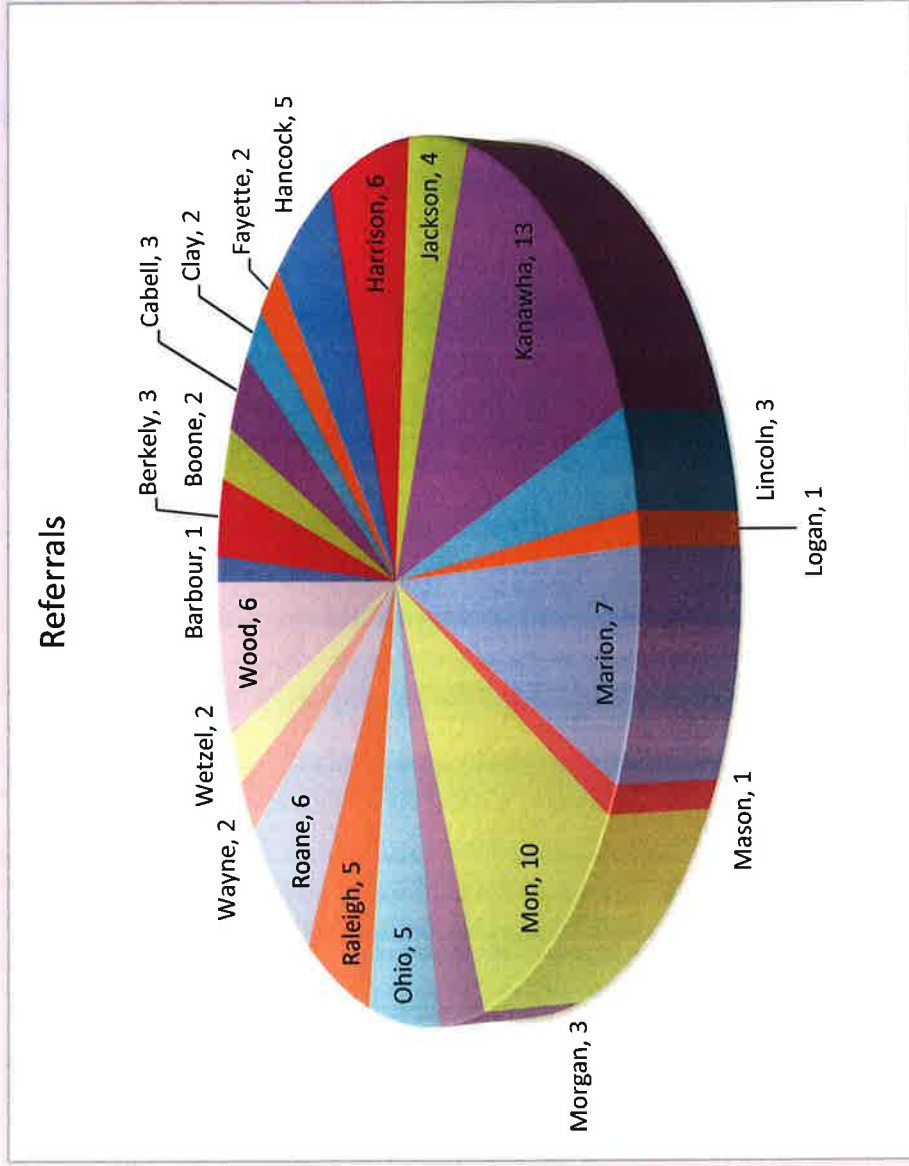
A new three year lease (beginning October 1, 2015) has been signed for the clinic to remain at the Weirton Medical Center Office Building.

Looking forward, the fiscal director position will take on a different look as Barbara Jones prepares to enter semi-retirement and will begin working part time in January.

The year 2016 will mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary for this organization.

## Referrals by County 2014-15

Brooke Place received 94 referrals. There were 100 referrals the previous year. We continue to receive referrals for boys (5) because caseworkers can shoot off referrals at a touch of a button to all providers and occasionally forget that not every provider is co-ed. There are 25 counties represented, a decrease from 30 last year. Actual admissions have come from Boone, Logan, Marion, Kanawha, Wood, and Hancock, among others. Transportation for home visits is difficult when girls hail from far away counties. Kanawha County referred most often (13) but only 2 new admission. There is an expectation that the referral numbers will look very different next year, with a significant decrease. This is based on the state's Safe-at-Home initiative, which will use a wraparound model to serve more children and families in the home.



On the chart above, note there are no referrals from Brooke, Marshall, or Tyler Counties.

Referrals By Month (July thru June)											
J (6)	A (5)	S (6)	O (7)	N (9)	D (7)	J (6)	F (6)	M (13)	A (11)	M (11)	J (7)

## 2014-15 in Snapshots



The Wicked Witch of the East had some pretty big shoes to fill, but the auxiliary committee was all over it. They set up this display for the 8<sup>th</sup> annual "There's No Place Like Home" fundraiser. Ryan and Carolee Lancaster found the house in their neighborhood, asked to borrow it, and carried it three blocks before they disassembled it and drove it to the dance site, where they promptly dropped it on the witch. Those iconic stockings and ruby slippers were courtesy of Vicki and Gary Williams, who came across them in Lowe's and immediately saw their potential!

We are sharing one of our favorite prom pictures on the right. This young woman was beautifully turned out for her senior dance. What we like best is that she shared her heart with us!



Jean Bartholow (center) was honored at the annual dance for her ongoing contribution to its success. Left: Darlene Brennan Right: Carolee Lancaster