



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



**annual report**  
**2015-2016**

## Report from the Executive Director

It's been an interesting year. That's 'interesting' in the way you mean it when you're looking at something you don't really like but don't want to say what you really think. Yeah, it's been that kind of year.

By the time July 1 came around, the Bureau for Children and Families had already rolled out their plans for 'blowing up the system.' Yes, those are the words the Cabinet Secretary for DHHR used. At the time, providers like us took this to mean we had an opportunity to help redesign the system of care. We submitted proposals that would have enhanced after care and transitional living for young adults. Foster care agencies developed plans for treatment foster care. Emergency shelters examined how their agencies fit into the larger system. Most of the proposals that were submitted never received feedback, and residential providers were eventually informed that the bundled rate method of payment was going to disappear and be replaced by a fee-for-service model used in outpatient care. This is yet another case of trying to shove a square peg in a round hole.

The idea of wanting to build capacity for keeping children in their homes and communities through the Safe-at-Home project has merit. The project, though, billed as cost neutral, is funded through a waiver agreement with the Federal government to use money the state saves by not having children in residential care to pay for the wraparound services in home. This does not account for children who

*need* residential services. The state has not yet built capacity for foster homes or wrap around services. It is the position of Family Connections and other providers that residential treatment is not a destination; it is an intervention.

Some of the draconian measures initially suggested when a draft contract was rolled out were eventually removed. The removal did not occur without the assistance of attorneys, the courts, and the media. Family Connections stayed involved in the negotiations; it would have been impossible to seek relief from these rigid proposals without an attorney. At the end of the fiscal, on June 30, in fact, Family Connections was presented with a contract it was expected to sign in July. The attorneys and the providers they represented went back to work to address the safety of children, some burdensome requirements, and reimbursement issues.



It is difficult to say how it will be resolved. Family Connections' board of directors was involved in the developments and decision making as events unfolded. It has been an extra-ordinary process for Family Connections, and participation for this small agency has not been without risks and rewards. By taking a position on the matter

of the contract, Family Connections continues to mature as an organization.



Board Officers: Missy Kell, Vice-President; Bernice Pitcock, President; Kathy Furbee, Treasurer; Peg Cartus, Secretary

The board of directors had planned a retreat for March 2016 to develop a new long term plan. With the uncertainties surrounding funding and direction, the retreat was rescheduled for October 2016, which is in the new fiscal year.

The outpatient clinic has as many clients as the therapists can handle. The clinic's license is good through August 31, 2017. A consumer survey is completed in January or February every year. The results of the 2016 survey were uniformly positive. Clients are pleased with the therapists, believe they are better off than before they began counseling, and they find the office staff helpful and respectful.

At the beginning of this fiscal year, the Bureau had some money in a fund that would have had to be returned to the Feds if not used; therefore, every child in the foster care system was allowed to have a prescribed amount of money (controlled by the provider) to use for recreational activities with an educational component. The Brooke Place residents spent a day in

Pittsburgh that included a Pirate game, a ride on the T, a Ducky Tour of the city, and lunch at the Hard Rock Café. Other activities: a day trip to Washington DC and a tour of the Air and Space Museum; Blennerhasset Island tour and ferry ride; Sandcastle and Kennywood Park; Carnegie Science Center; Pittsburgh Zoo; and Laurel Caverns. Brooke Place purchased six Kindles with the money, plus ebooks, and the girls haven't stopped reading yet.



Girls at PNC Park. Notice the T-shirts with the ruby slippers on the back. People thought they were a dance team, and the girls went with the story!

Through grants awarded by the Women's Giving Circle and HCSBank, Brooke Place was able to purchase items to enhance its life skills program. In addition, through the Community Foundation of the Ohio Valley, Brooke Place had a paid intern for six weeks who worked with the girls individually to help them learn new skills and improve old ones. They assisted in building a raised bed garden and planted and harvested their produce. They made pillowcases, budgeted, practiced for a driving test, planned meals, worked with making change and reading an analog clock, learned how to read food labels and how to shop on a budget, practiced parenting skills by using a Real Care Baby, how to construct a resume and conduct themselves in an interview, how to make medical appointments, and manage basic first aid. Whew!

## Report from the Fiscal Director

As Family Connections celebrates 40 years of service to families, we continue to grow both fiscally and organizationally. We have three therapists at the clinic that handle the continual growth of referrals. The population at the group home remains steady and at most times the Brooke Place is at capacity.

The past fiscal year also saw some changes in staff positions. The fiscal director is now working 10 hours per week and a case manager was hired to assist the group home director.

Fiscal Year 2015-2016 goals had 5 short term goals with 30 objectives. Of these objectives, 24 were met or 80%. Some of the goals were not met due to the limitations in a few staff positions.

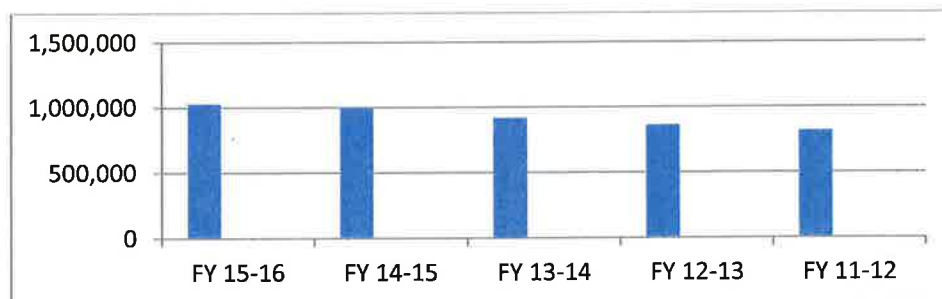
The budget for Fiscal Year 2015-2016 saw a 3% increase, which is the organizations' goal each year. The increase centered on the continuation of the 3% cost of living adjustment to staff wages, as well as the bonuses. We were approached to lease one office at the clinic and a contract was drawn up. Stanley Psychological Services offers services there.

After the annual audit, a management letter was given to the board that addressed the problems with receipts for charges to the credit card. A new policy was adopted and the issue has since been taken care of.

Weirton Medical Center is in the process of updating offices and hallways in the Medical Office Building. It is our hope that our offices will be updated with new flooring. The group home facility is well maintained by our maintenance person.

As we enter our 41<sup>st</sup> year of operation, we strive to remain fiscally sound, even in the midst of the State's financial budgetary limitations.

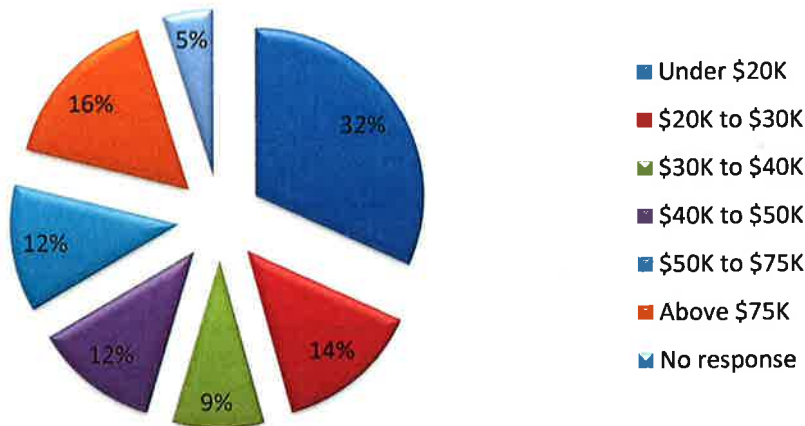
Below is a graph that follows the budget for the last 5 years:



## Outpatient Clinic

There were 420 clinic referrals (an increase from the previous year - 379) during the past fiscal year with 322 charts being opened compared to 290 in 2015-16. The no show/withdrawal rate was 20% (compared to 20% the previous year).

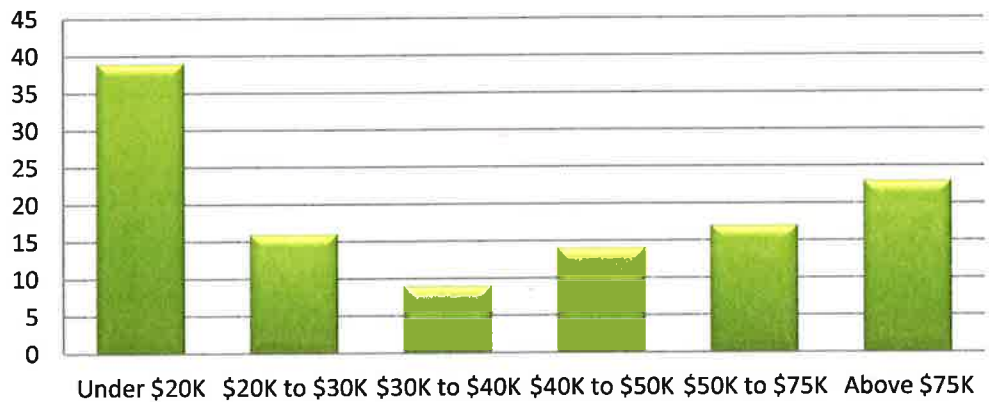
### Family Income 2014-15



The income chart to the left is representative of new admissions in the 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 38% 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. This has not changed in years, which seems to clearly demonstrate that poverty has a big impact on the need for services.

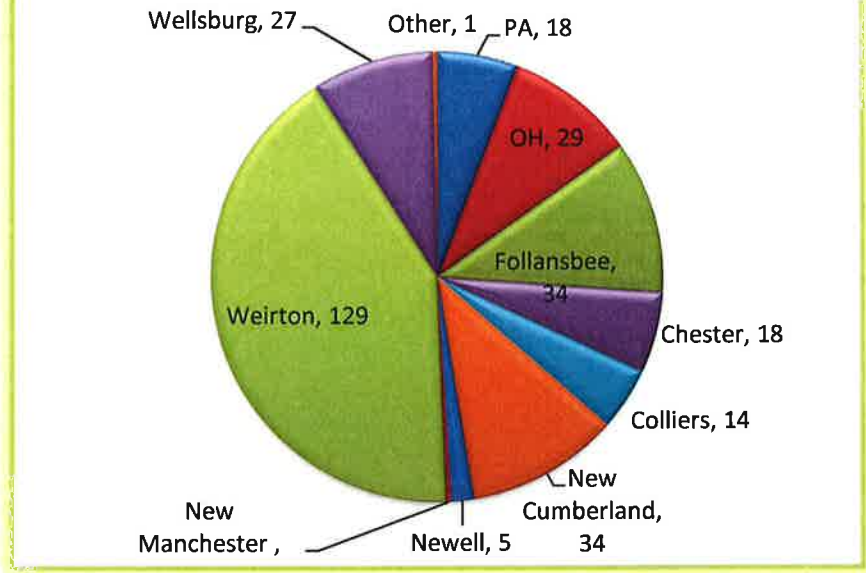
### 2014-15 Snapshot of Income for Families with 4 or more Dependents



The 2016 Federal Poverty Level Guidelines indicate that a family with 4 dependents is considered to be living in poverty if their income is at or below \$24,300; 5 dependents: \$28,440; 6 dependents: \$32,580; 7 dependents: \$36,730.

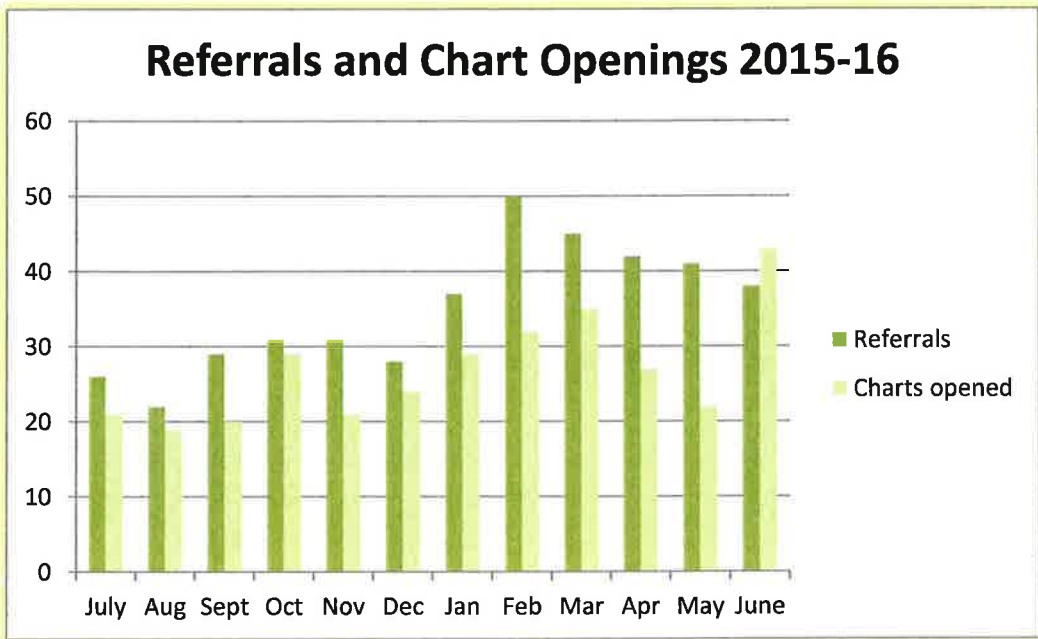


### Consumers come from...2015-16

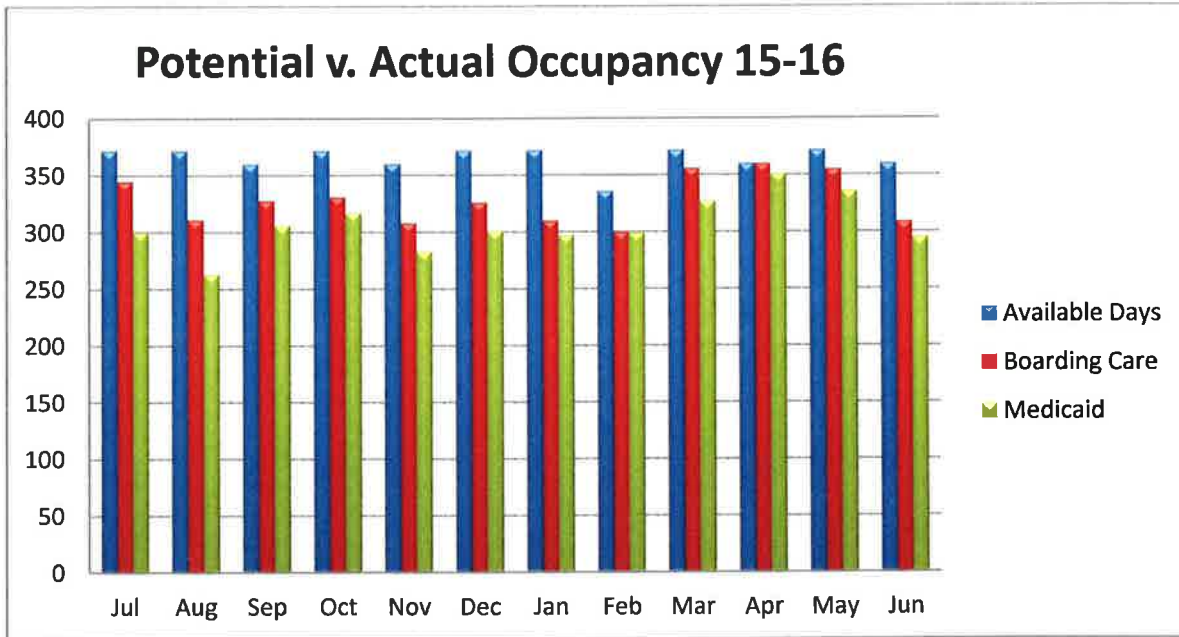


**Above:** This year 129 out of 310 new clients at the clinic come from Weirton (42%), which is down slightly from last year. Referrals from Brooke and Hancock Counties outside of Weirton account for 43%. Referrals from Ohio (state) account for 9% and PA, 6%. Because the clinic does not accept the Ohio 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.

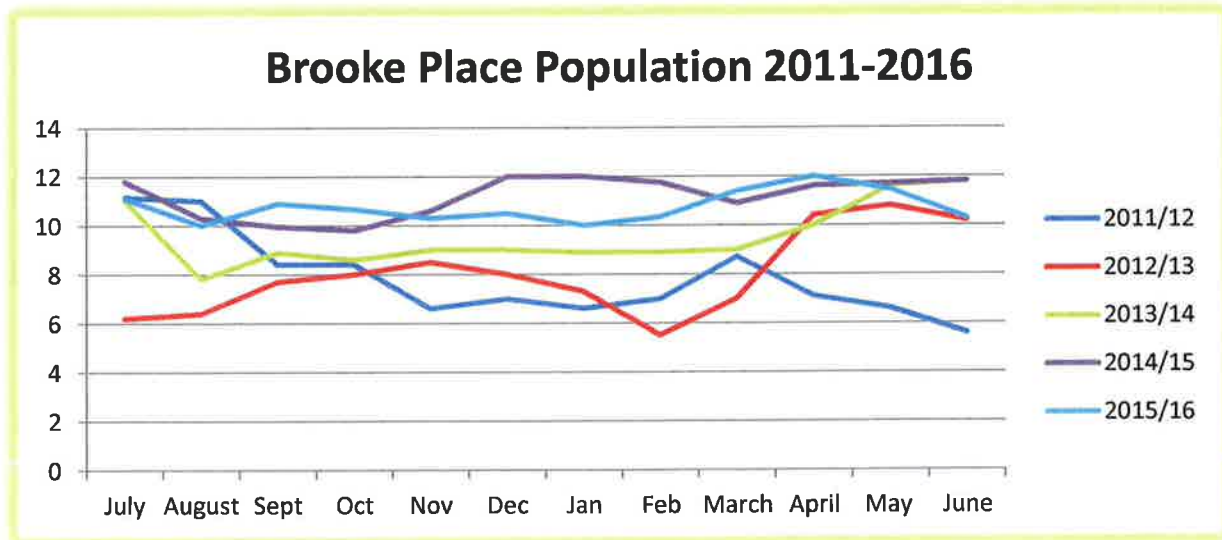
### Referrals and Chart Openings 2015-16



# 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 bed 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 or on all day activities. As the chart indicates, March/April/May were the months with the highest population. (Last year it was January.) 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 were at 89.9% **Below:** Occupancy over the last 5 years.



# Fund Development

## I. 2015-16 FUND DEVELOPMENT GOALS

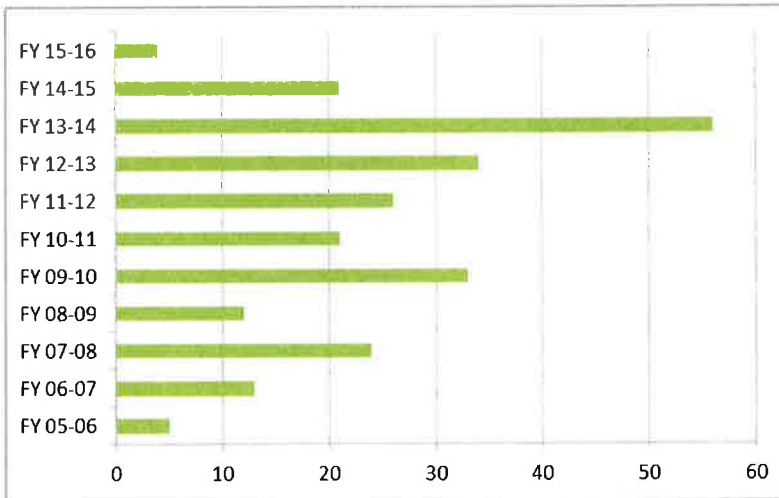
### Goal 1: Continue the newsletter with at least 3 issues per year.

This goal was met.

#### Comments:

The newsletter was mailed in August and December 2015 and in May 2016 to over 300 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 was able to put out two newsletters before she could no longer continue working. Under her guidance, a monthly newsletter for families was begun but it was not able to be continued. 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 4 press releases. See above. (The absence of the development assistant made it difficult to keep up with press releases.)

Eighth annual fund raiser "There's No Place Like Home" with proceeds totaling \$6,438.69

Family Connections also held its second annual Car/Bike Show with proceeds totaling \$1,521.50.

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 and the wine and dine event at Williams Country Club. Family Connections was present for a Senior Center fundraiser and another one for the Comfort House. Family Connections assisted the United Way at their golf scramble and Super Bowl party. 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 had three board member participate in the Weirton United Way events that met our obligation as members. The 2016-17 plan continues to challenge the board to increase their involvement in these community activities.

The board recruited new members in the business community and also with fund development expertise.

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

This goal was partially met.

**Comments:**

The idea was to build the auxiliary to the extent that not all volunteers had to organize or work every event. The auxiliary did increase its membership, but then had to reevaluate the membership in terms of its real commitment. With the loss of the development assistant, rebuilding is underway again. The committee does have two board members participating.

**Goal 5: Maintain the investment account.**

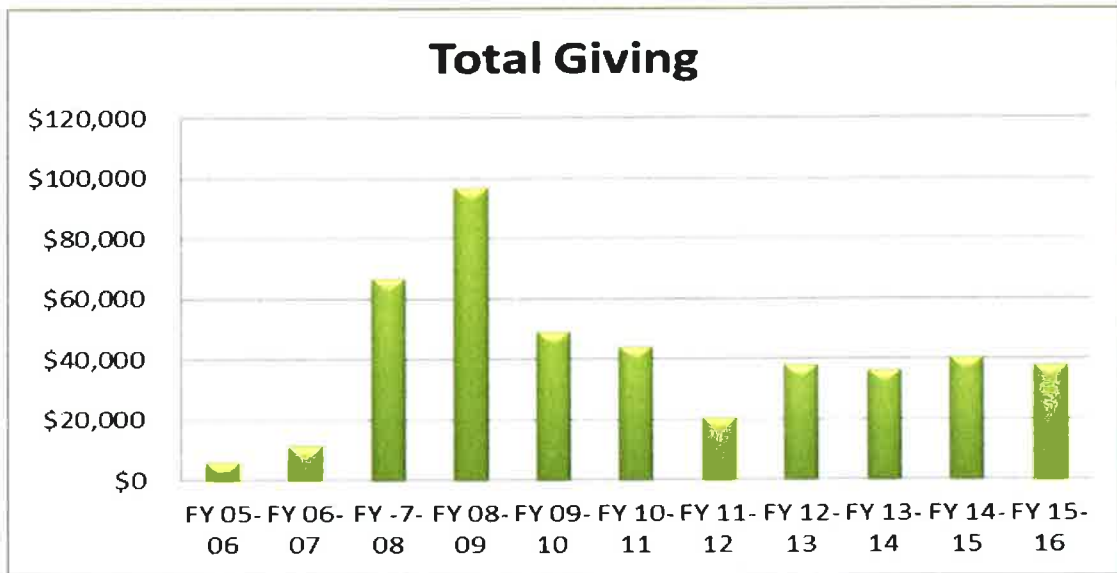
This goal was met. Andy McKenzie, the fund manager of the Wells Fargo account presented information to the board again in 2015-16 on the account and offered suggestions for future investment strategies.

**Other Efforts:**

- Arcelor Mittal again purchased over \$3,000 worth of Christmas gifts for the residents at Brooke Place and donated \$500 toward the purchase of lawn equipment.
- Applications to the Weirton United Way were submitted. The Weirton United Way allocated \$3,000 to the clinic.
- Grants submitted to the Women's Giving Circle (\$3,100), and Hancock County Savings Bank Foundation (\$1,000) were awarded.
- A request for a paid intern through the Foundation of the Ohio Valley was awarded.
- Community Resource Fair at the Weirton Event Center to raise awareness of area services.

## II. DONATION REPORT

2014-2015	2015-2016
Total: \$40,364.23	Total: \$38,109.33
In kind: \$14,673.06	In kind: \$12,734.00
Cash: \$ 23,896.17	Cash: \$16,775.33



The 2015-16 goal to increase giving by 10% (cash donations) was not met.



**Left:** Someone dropped a house on the Wicked Witch of the East – “No Place Like Home” Dance April 2015; **Above:** Jean Bartholow and Vicki Williams help out at United Way.

# This was the year that was



Barb hanging out in Pittsburgh with the girls.



Gary and Vicki Williams accept 2015 WV Child Care Association Community Award.



Jean accepts grant award from the Women's Giving Circle.



Life skills at work