
Report from the Executive Director

Throughout the year, Family Connections asks the question, “How are we doing?” The question is a natural outcome of implementing continuous quality improvements. We pose this question to the people who use our services and to the employees who deliver our services. As we consider the responses, a picture begins to emerge of the organization’s strengths and successes, and just as importantly, of the areas where we need to redouble our efforts to do better.



2009-2010 Board Officers:

Peg Cartus, Secretary; Elaine Cipoletti, Treasure;
Cathy Sobel, President; Jennifer Kirkbride, VP

Our employees are our most valuable resource, so making certain they have education opportunities in and out of the agency is important. One of our Brooke Place child care workers completed her master’s degree and moved from the group home to our clinic and is now counseling children and adults in the office as well as in-home. Family Connections contributed to her graduate and post-graduate expenses through our Education Assistance Program. Annually, Family Connections offers

childcare staff an opportunity to attend the West Virginia Child Care Association (WVCCA) conference. In October 2009, five employees attended the conference and had the chance to network with people from all over the state doing similar work. We sent counselors to learn more about trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy to improve our response to children and adults who have experienced traumatic events in their lives. We sent the Brooke Place Director and a childcare worker to learn how to implement a new life skills assessment tool the WV Bureau for Child and Families is requiring us to use. We sent the Fiscal Director and Administrative Assistant to a workshop that highlighted significant changes-to-come in managed care.



Peg Cartus at the WVCCA conference.

Within the organization, monthly training is a mandate. All staff learn how to defuse potential acting out through non-violent crisis intervention. They refresh their listening skills, group counseling skills, and decision-making skills. Employees participate in education on family systems work, suicide risk assessment, and relational aggression. The board of directors not only supports this emphasis on training

and education, several of them provide extra leadership by teaching. Peg Cartus shares her expertise on child abuse and neglect, Chris Byers speaks on substance abuse, and former board member Matt Rogerson offers insight into the role of the law enforcement in dealing with children and families. Additionally, Ms. Cartus and Mr. Byers offered workshops at the WVCCA conference.

Committing financial and human resources to improving the knowledge and skills of all employees is just one way Family Connections makes an effort to provide quality services.

Family Connections also recognizes and draws from the terrific resources in our community. The agency's involvement with the Weirton Chamber of Commerce has helped us network and tap into the creativity, generosity, and expertise of our community partners. Committee work is vital to the organization's continuous quality efforts, and here again, we look to the community for assistance. Having community folks as part of our committees helps us take a more objective look at our policies and practices. Four of our committees – Staffing and Program; Facilities and Grounds; Human Rights; and Fund Development – benefit greatly from the participation of employees *and* community friends.



Child Care Worker Deborah Brush (in tie-dye) at the center of a WVCCA conference workshop.

Family Connections honored the extraordinary commitment of former employee and current volunteer Jean Bartholow by nominating her for the 2009 Community Service Award given by the WVCCA.



Jean and Joanne share a moment after Jean receives her WVCCA award.

The organization also appreciated the work of all staff through participation in Ladies Day at the Chamber and an outing to PNC Park to take in a Pirate ballgame.



Child Care Worker Arleta Ogden and RN Patty McConaughy at Ladies Day luncheon.

The work to not only stay current with trends in children family services, but to be part of the forward momentum in the field, is sometimes daunting, always challenging, and frequently rewarding. It is also never boring.

Report from the
Fiscal Director

This year was full of financial challenges for Family Connections. The disappointing occupancy rate (79.8%) at Brooke Place, coupled with a precipitous drop in the daily rate following a period of high occupancy in 2008-09, contributed to the agency ending the fiscal year in the red. Another factor challenging the bottom line was the hiring of a full time therapist for the clinic. In that case, income did not match projections. Management team continues to explore options to increase revenues in both organizational programs.

In reviewing the strategic plan, there were 6 short term financial goals, and 69% were met. Many of the goals focused on increasing public awareness and ensuring the financial stability and sound fiscal practices of the organization. The short term goals that related directly to the finances of the agency were met and most were continued into the next year's plan.

All staff received a 3% cost of living increase on July 1, 2009, but for the first time since the inception of the annual increase, this line item was not included in the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2010. One way, though, that the agency was able to demonstrate an understanding of employee needs was in not increasing the employee's contribution for health benefits and to continue to assist employees with their deductible.

The board of directors elected to invest funds with Morgan Stanley. An investment committee was developed to make decisions regarding this account.

Due to the age of the Brooke Place facility and the wear and tear of daily living on everything from faucets to bed frames, a number of major projects were undertaken this year. These included painting the interior and exterior of the group home and installing new carpeting and flooring in the main living area (including the bedrooms) as well as the multi-purpose room. These expensive projects benefited from the efforts of the fund development committee which raised most of the money to cover costs.

A new part time cook, with experience working as a chef at a local country club, was hired. Since she began, the monthly food bills regularly fall within the budgeted amount. As mentioned earlier, a shift leader from the group home assumed counselor responsibilities at the clinic. We are hopeful that this will increase the viability of the Weirton office.

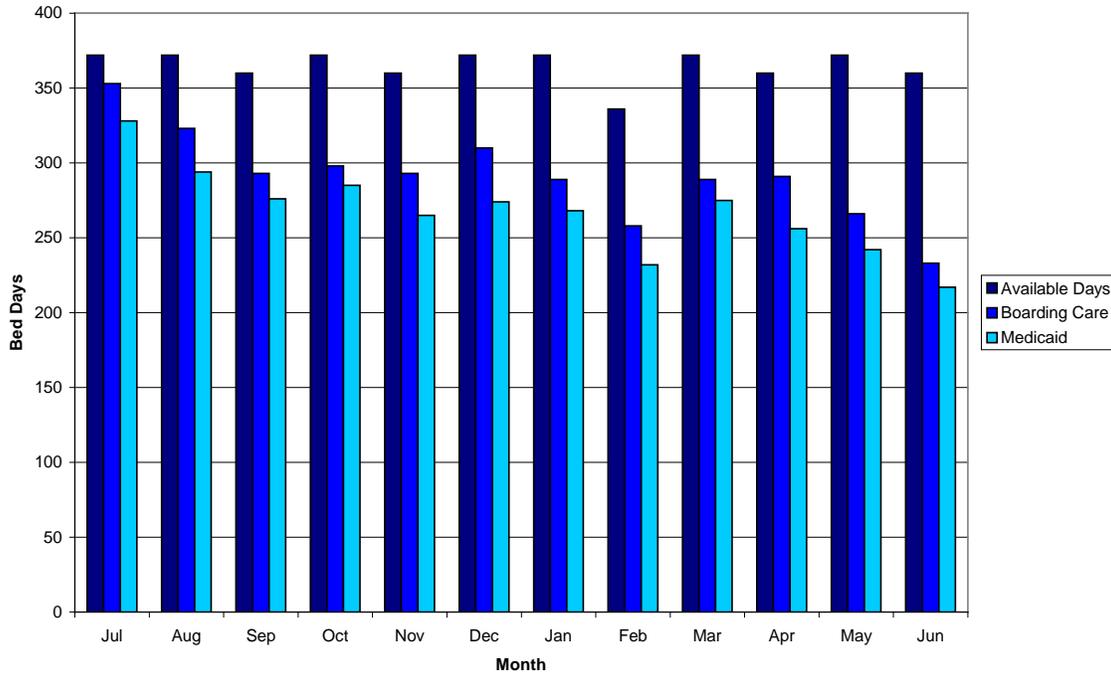
Even without the maintenance position being filled, we were able to continue to have repairs done on a timely basis. This position continues to be a difficult one to fill due to the fluctuation in the amount of hours and work needed.

We look forward to celebrating our 35th anniversary in February 2011!



Brooke Place

Potential v. Actual Occupancy FY 2009-2010



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. Medicaid is the number of treatment days that were invoiced to the Bureau of Medical Services. In general, the boarding care and treatment days will be close, but never equal, because treatment days are not counted when residents are on home visits or in the hospital. As the chart indicates, July was the month with the highest population. (For the last 2 years it was May; in 06-07 it was Dec.) There are 4,380 bed days each year. In 2009-10 the percentage of boarding care use was 79.8%. That is a decrease from 88.7% last year but better than 67% and 66% in the 2 years before that. The target Brooke Place is still shooting for is at least 92% for the year.

A factor that continues to impact the resident population is the Automated Placement Referral system which was initiated in November 2008. This is a web-based referral system used by DHHR to send out information on children needing out-of-home placement. A DHHR worker can send information on one child to multiple agencies or just one agency. It places providers in more direct and immediate competition for referrals, but it also presents an opportunity to receive referrals that we might not have gotten in the past. The Brooke Place director then has the chance make a contact and build the relationship. What is lost in this system is time to do a face-to-face interview with the potential resident and a solid way to connect with families at the outset. We are looking into ways to increase the contact with families. Brooke Place served 23 girls last year and 21 in 2008-09.

Report from the
Brooke Place Director

This past year was a “tornado” of activity! Staff members and residents alike were busy over the past year with various projects at Brooke Place.

The Brooke Place Director and a Child Care Worker attended training on the Ansell Casey Life Skills Program. This program is a comprehensive approach to teaching our residents life skills they will need to succeed once out on their own.

The program begins with an assessment designed to gauge a resident’s current life skills knowledge and to assess areas where they may need continued instruction. A plan is then developed tailored to that resident’s particular needs and further instruction is offered. The resident is assessed periodically to mark their progress.

Also keeping us busy this year, work continued on the grounds development collaboration between the Family Connections fund development committee and West Virginia University’s Division of Resource Management.

On a snowy day in February, Peter Butler and Jenny Selin along with a number of students in the landscape architecture class at WVU piled in vans and made the trip to Brooke Place. The students were able to meet with Brooke Place staff and residents to get their input regarding their visions for the 6.5 acres of property at Brooke Place.



WVU students tour the Brooke Place grounds

Students then went back to Morgantown, charged with developing design plans for the property.

In April, members of the fund development committee went to WVU to hear presentations by the students regarding their design plans for the Brooke Place property. The designs were compiled into a book from which we may choose our favorite design elements to submit to the landscape architecture class for a final design draft to be created. This upcoming year, 2010-2011, promises to bring some exciting changes to the Brooke Place campus.



A WVU student gives a presentation on his plans for the Brooke Place grounds

The staff and residents of Brooke Place are always thankful for the support of the community. While we strive to be an active part of the community, the residents at Brooke Place also enjoy giving back to the community.

The residents volunteer throughout the year at Kristen's Kloset, which is a local clothes closet operated by the family of God Christian Center. The residents also offered their assistance in the running of the summer youth camp at the Weirton Christian Center.

On a Sunday afternoon every fall, we open our home to the members of our community to enjoy a day of fun and food at Brooke Place.



Brooke Place Open House

Guests can partake in the cookout-style food and treats offered and then receive a tour guided by the residents of Brooke Place. There's even a ducky pond for the little ones!!

Hosted by Family Connections, was the third annual "There's No Place like Home" dinner/dance to raise funds for the residents of Brooke Place. The event took place on May 1st, at the Weirton Holiday Inn.

This year's dinner/dance was held in memory of Rosemarie Bragg, a community volunteer who was a member of the fund development committee and was one of the founders of this event. Mrs. Bragg passed away from leukemia in December 2009.

The event garnered a great deal of support from the community and from local businesses. Despite the difficult financial times that we are all facing, community members turned out to show their financial support to the agency by purchasing a ticket for a full steak dinner catered by Undo's Restaurant and a night of dancing with DJ Bobby LaRosa. Guests also enjoyed buying tickets for a chance auction and a 50/50 cash drawing, as well as bidding on items in a silent auction. The event serves to strengthen Family Connections' relationship with the community and provides needed support for Brooke Place and its residents. Plans are already underway for the next year's "There's No Place Like Home."

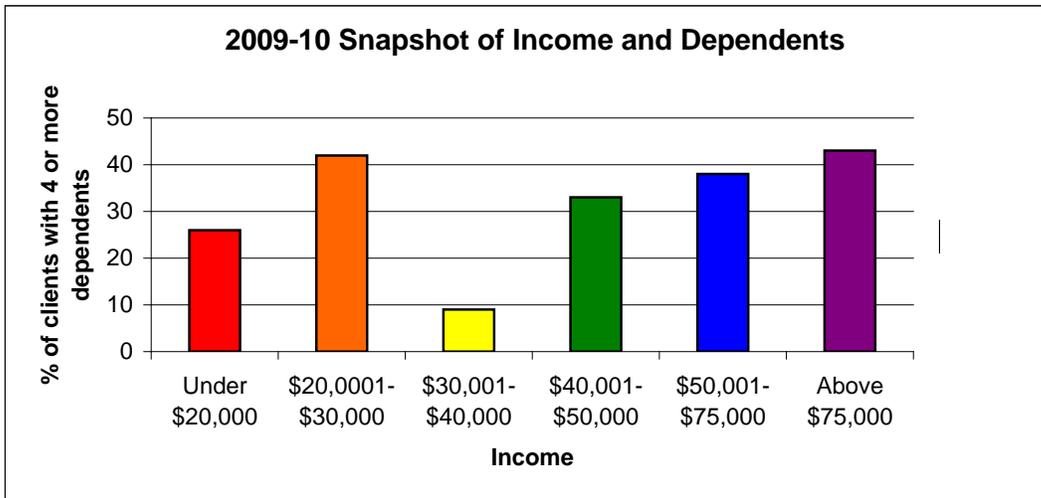
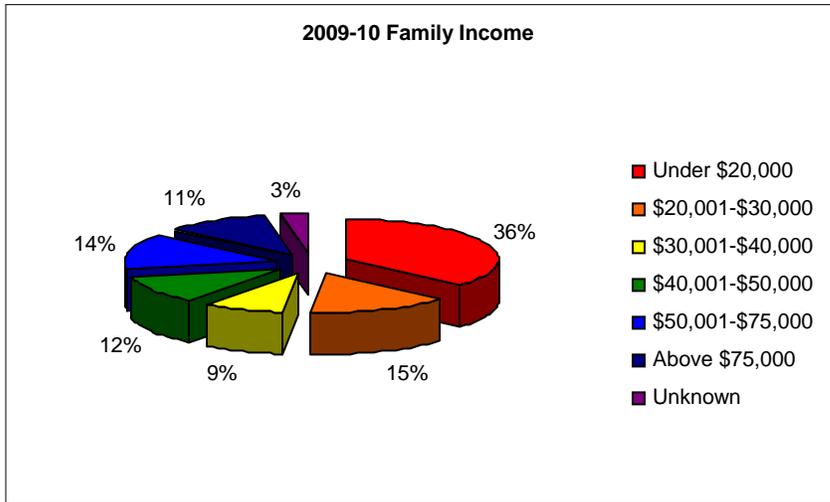


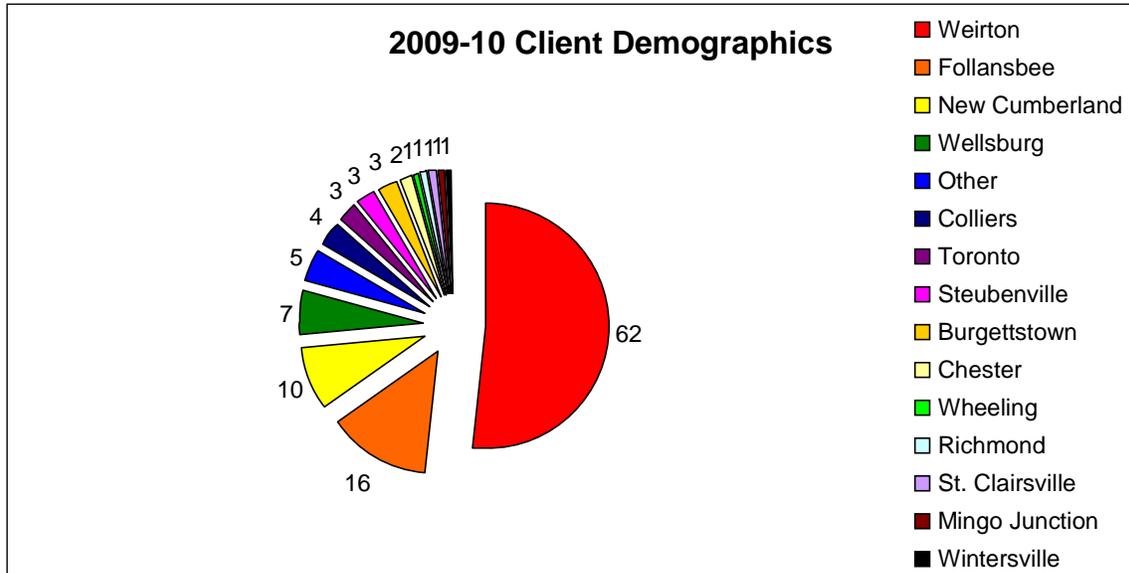
This past year has been a busy year for Brooke Place residents and staff. We look forward to a busy and successful 2010-2011.

Outpatient Clinic

The clinic received 177 referrals in 2009-2010 and opened 124 charts. There was a 24% withdrawn/no show for first time clients. Clients seek counseling for a variety of reasons, but the primary reason is that they are experiencing some distress. Often callers will cite depression or anxiety. Generally these symptoms are rooted in changing life circumstances that contribute to stress. One

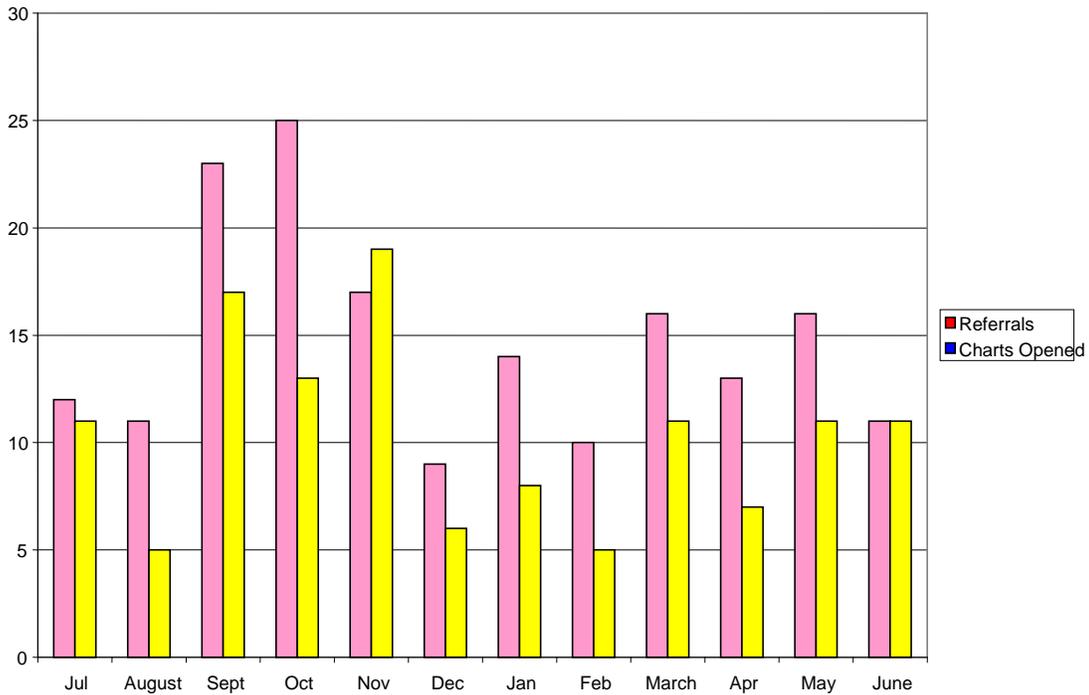
critical stressor can be financial. As shown in the chart on the left, more than half of clients seeking help are also trying to manage on a limited income that requires using community and family resources. The chart below shows the number of dependents in families at various income levels. The 2009 poverty threshold for a family of 4 is \$21,832. Poverty guidelines are often set 1 ½ times that figure.





Not surprisingly, 50% of our clients at the clinic come from Weirton. Referrals from Brooke and Hancock Counties outside of Weirton account for almost 30%. Referrals from Ohio (state) account for 11%. Because the clinic does not accept the Ohio medical card, these clients all carry private insurance. One of the pieces of information we track on discharged clients is the number of counseling sessions they attend. In 2009-2010, 24% of clients saw a counselor for the initial session only. Another 20% saw a counselor twice. Thirty percent of the clients came to counseling for 3 or 4 sessions.

2009-2010 Clinic referrals/openings



Fund Development

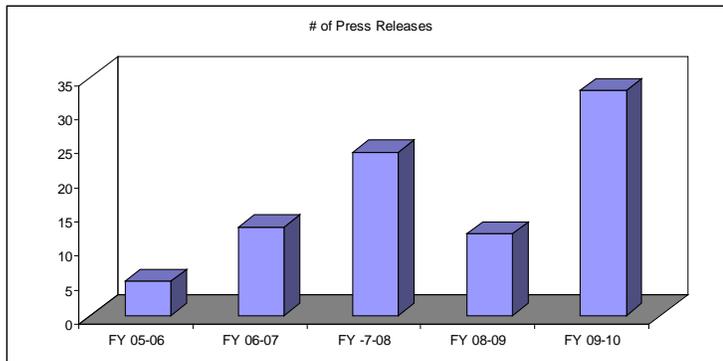
I. 2009-2010 FUND DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Goal 1: Make more inroads into Brooke County (community organizations, solicitations, etc.)

Comment:

This goal was partially met. Wellsburg Chamber of Commerce members were entered into the fundraiser (added 11 new names) but most were already listed as Weirton Chamber members or on the list already.

Barb made contact with the Wellsburg Chamber and learned of their activities and what is planned.



Brooke Scene and the Brooke County Review published many of our press releases which was approximately 33 for this fiscal year.

Goal 2: Market the agency and its fund development activities on the Family Connections web site.

Comment:

This goal was met. The web site was overhauled in general and specifically included a lot of information about on line donating and how to do it. The dance was advertised on the web site.

Goal 3: Investigate marketing the agency into new arenas (ex: becoming a part of psa's for radio/tv, etc.)

Comment:

This goal was met. We did not utilize public service announcements or the TV to market the agency. However, we are participants in the WV Development Office's Neighborhood Investment Program (NIP). We used our ability to offer tax credits in return form \$500 and up donations to market our organization and get some PR through newspaper articles and newsletter articles. Our participation in NIP is a new arena. We re-applied for this coming fiscal year.

Two members of the committee attended a two-day training event on social media. Social media can be used by businesses to help with fund development as well as promotion, advocacy, education, information-sharing and so on. Whether

or not Family Connections will have a presence on social media sites such as Facebook remains to be seen. We are not presently receiving on line donations. It would also remain to be seen if a Facebook presence would garner any traffic as it appears our consumers are not, at least yet, looking for us in this fashion. Direct mailings, such as the newsletter and solicitation letters, continue to elicit interest from the community and, consequently, most donations come from this type of contact.

Weirton Area Chamber of Commerce’s Leads to Success breakfast meets once per month and is being attended by members of the committee. We have the opportunity each month to make a quick presentation about Family Connections.

Goal 4: Recommend to the board that Family Connections begin an investment account which could lead to the establishment of an endowment.

Comment:

This goal was met. As of June 30, 2010, our investment account balance with Morgan Stanley is \$54, 825.33.

Goal 4: Raise \$50,000.



DONATION REPORT:

\$49,336.96 total cash and in kind
 \$39,102.96 cash and memorial and honor giving portion of the total (105 donors)*
 \$10,136.98 in kind portion of the total

2008-09	2009-10
Total: \$96,921.05	Total: \$49,336.96
Cash & honor/memorials: \$36,050	Cash & honor/memorials: \$39,102.96
In kind: \$12,990.83	In kind: \$10,136.98
OJJDP Grant: \$45,273.20	

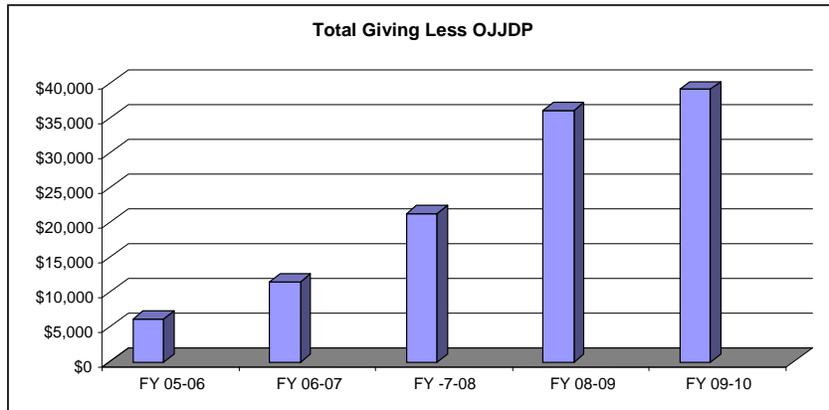
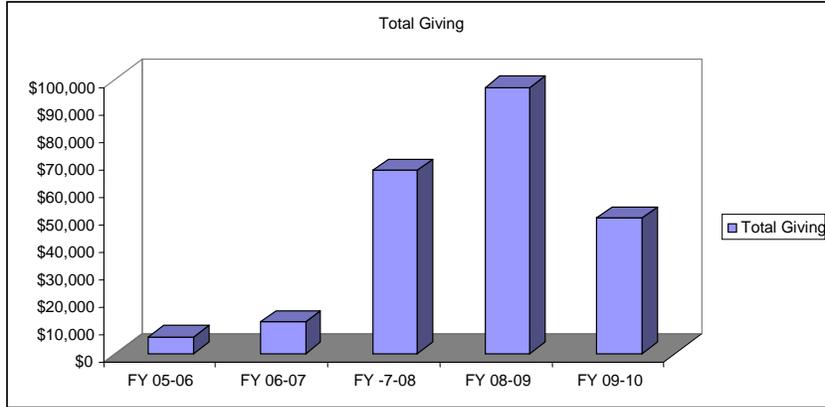
*\$1,420.00 represents the memorial and honor giving portion of the total (19 donors).
 \$1,215.00 (20 donors) represents the memorial and honor giving portion from 2009.

Comment:

This goal was not met. Even though the fundraising goal of \$50,000 was achieved in 08-09, we were appreciably boosted by the OJJDP grant. We missed the mark this year by \$663.04.

If we regard cash donations raised, minus the grant, we actually raised more cash this fiscal year. Although it was slight, memorial and honor giving also increased this fiscal year.

Family Connections 2009-2010 Annual Report



II. SOLICITATION STRATEGIES/RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Strategy: "THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME"

GOAL:	\$4,000.00	
Advance Ticket sales	\$2,180.00	(109)
Ticket Sales at Door	400.00	(20)
Silent Auction	1,045.00	
Basket Raffle	720.00	
50/50 Raffle	230.00	
Donations	<u>1,655.00</u>	
Income:	\$6,230.00	
Stamps	\$ 202.20	
Basket Stuff	51.49	
Gift Certificates	199.50	
Newbrough's	39.74	
Undo's – meals	<u>1,516.25</u>	
Expenses:	\$2,009.18	
PROFIT	\$4,220.82	

In-kind donations in the amount of \$3,077.02 helped us reach our goal. These donations fill the baskets we raffle and auction, and represent the goodwill of our community friends and businesses. Volunteers like Vicki and Gary Williams, Bobby LaRosa, Lynn Swan, and Jean Bartholow all give time and energy, which comes under the heading of *priceless*.



III. CONCLUSION

The goals of this committee are as follows:

1. Improve the awareness of Family Connections in the community.
2. Supplement operating income.
3. Connect with community members who desire to give something back to the community.

It is important to note that, at this juncture in the organization's involvement in formalized fund development, no goals speaks to raising a particular sum of cash, although we do set an annual amount. We are continuing to explore and strengthen our presence in the community and we are continually striving to provide the community with stewardship options by marketing and promoting our services. This is accomplished through:

- ✓ our newsletter (which we increased to four publications)
- ✓ our press releases (which almost tripled in number from last fiscal year) increased
- ✓ our mailing list increased to 960 names
- ✓ seeing "Family Connections" and "Brooke Place" positively mentioned in the press without our initiation

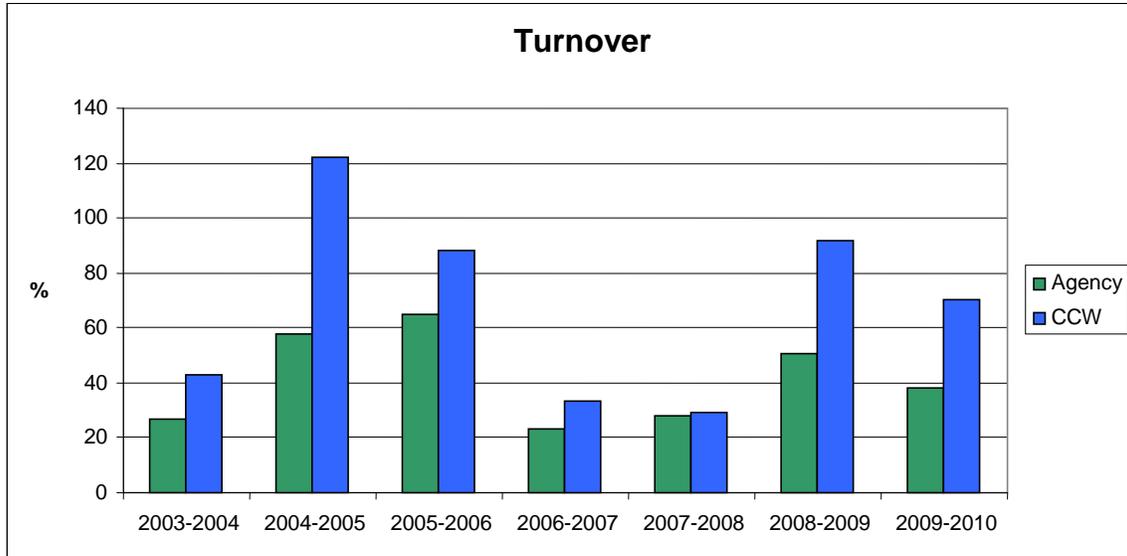
The committee also promoted the organization's association with Tricia Kingery to help us with marketing materials. The Brooke Place residents, although marginally active in the community, are continually encouraged by staff to give back as so much is given to them.

Without benefit of grant funds, we still raised 8.4% more cash than we did in 2009-2010. In order to meet our annual goal for 2010-2011 (to increase cash donations by 5%), we will need to raise at least \$41,057.

2010-2011 will be another opportunity for Family Connections to forge ahead with its fund development efforts, especially with the opportunities to keep the community informed about our progress with developing the grounds around Brooke Place and the collaboration with West Virginia University's landscape architecture program.

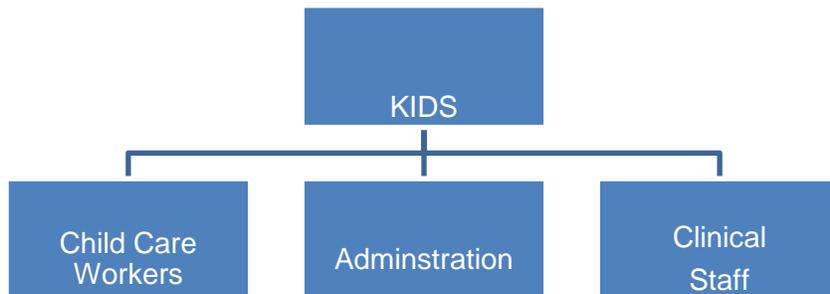


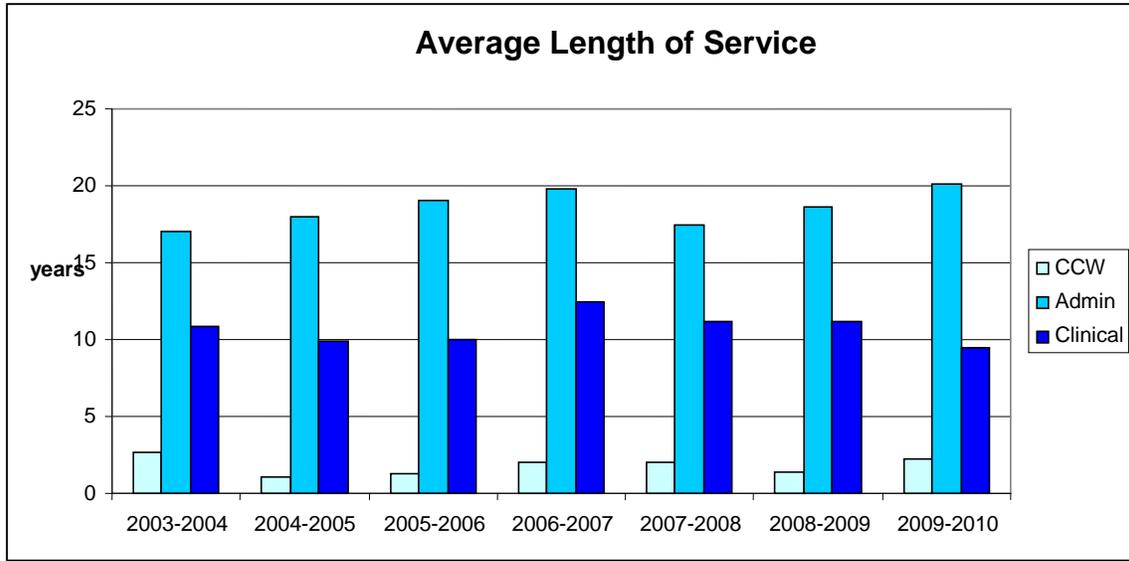
Human Resources



Explanation of 09-10 turnover:

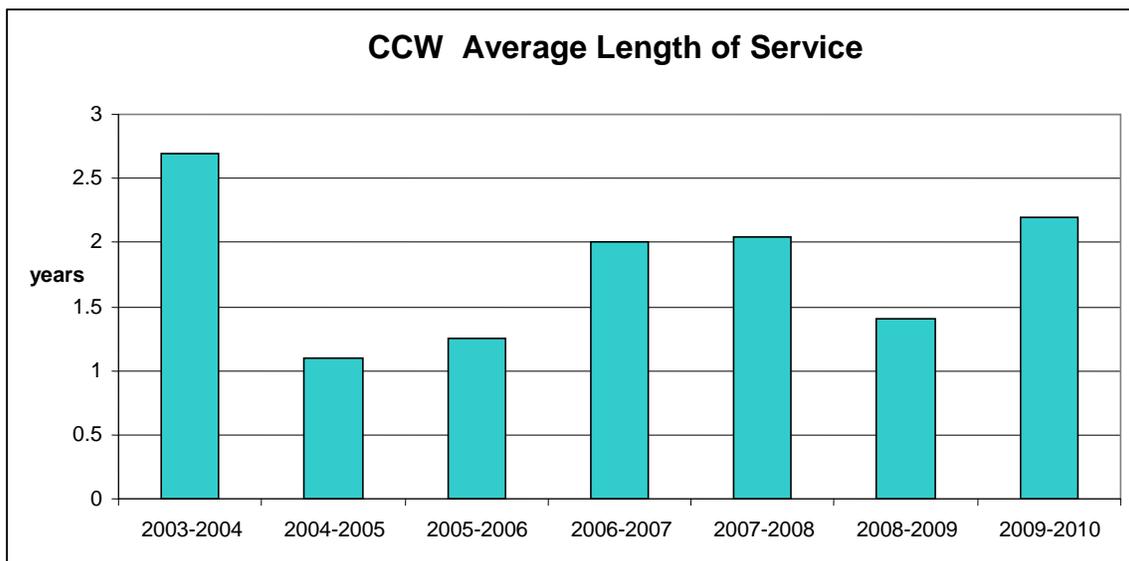
Child care turnover in 09-10 was 70.5%. Consequently, Family Connections did not meet its objective of achieving less than 50% turnover for the child care worker position. As we normally employ 9 child care workers, even 1 exit creates 11% turnover. However, our CQI process continues to monitor our turnover rate. Although staff exits in the child care worker position decreased this fiscal year as compared to last (91.8%), an ad hoc task force is continuing to study our recruitment processes and recommend improvements where appropriate. Our short-term plan goal for 09-10 was to not exceed 33 1/3% turnover for the child care worker position.

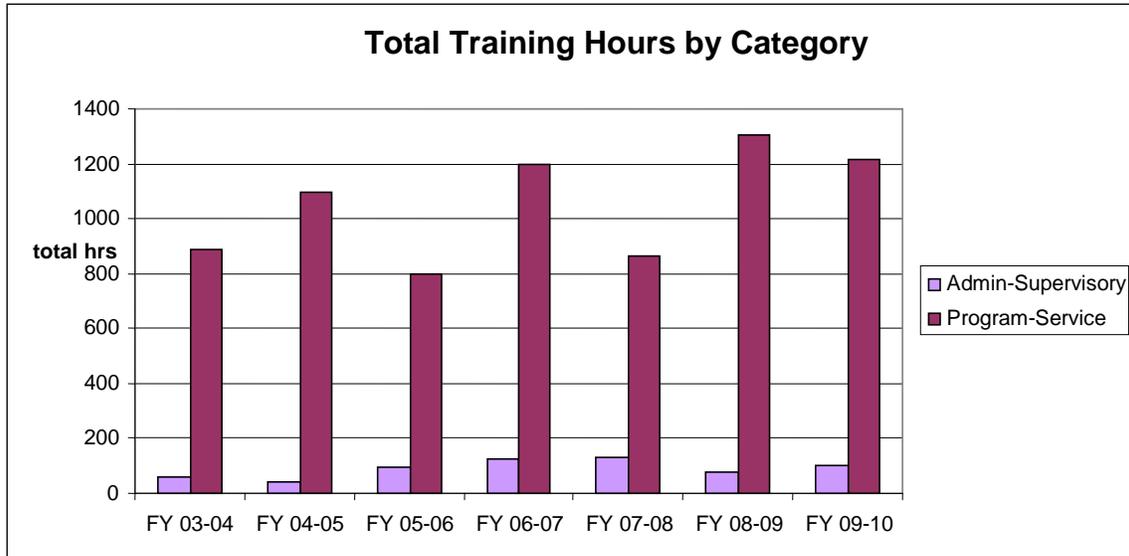




Average Length of Service:

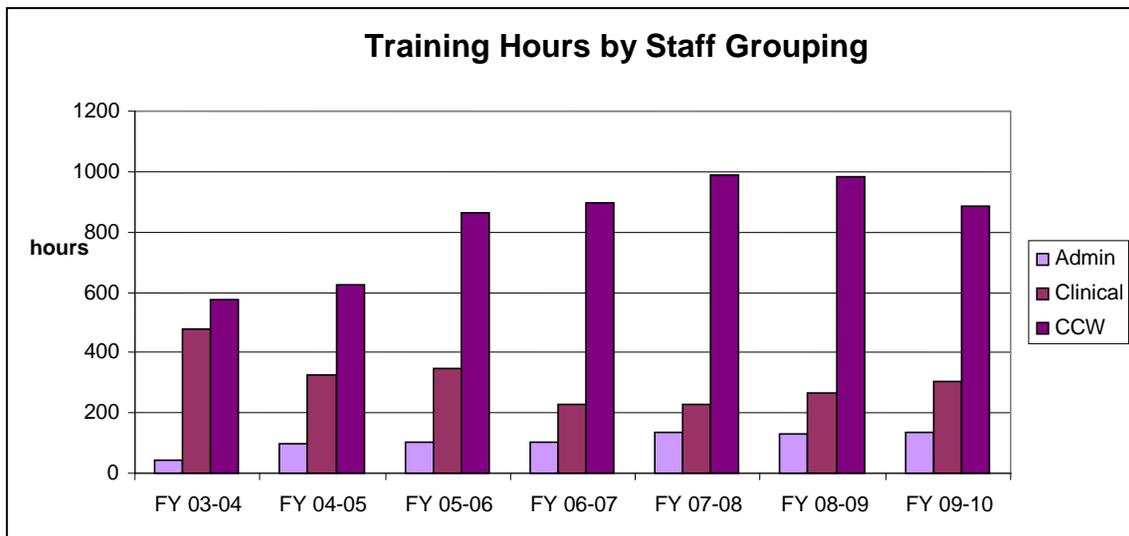
The child care worker's average length of service increased to 2.16 years in FY 09-10 as compared to 1.4 years in FY 08-09. Half of the total complement of direct care staff have less than one year of service. Retention of individuals in the child care position is critical to maintaining a core of experienced workers to mentor and train new employees and maintain the therapeutic milieu. Out of the 5 direct care staff that exited in FY 09-10, 4 had less than 1 year of service. The clinical director retired during this fiscal year, which caused a decrease in the average length of service, clinical category. A child care worker transferred to a therapist position during the year so her time at the agency was appropriately divided between the child care worker and clinical categories. The Executive Director and Brooke Place Director are counted both in the administrative and clinical categories as they fulfill both functions.





Total Training Hours by Category:

Training in the administrative and supervisory areas totaled 102 hours as compared to 76 hours in FY 08-09. This indicates the agency’s continuing quest to provide its administrative-supervisory staff with as much training as possible in policy and procedure, legal risks and overall risk management.



Training Hours by Staff Grouping

For purposes of the staff grouping, the Administrative category consists of the fiscal director and the administrative assistant. The Brooke Place director, executive director and therapist are in the Clinical category. Average hours per employee in each grouping are 69 (administrative), 151 (clinical) and 118 (child care worker).