



**familyconnections**

Counseling resources with *family* in mind

# THE CONNECTION

[www.familyconnectionsinc.org](http://www.familyconnectionsinc.org)

## Farewell Dear Friend

VOLUME 11 Edition 1 2015

**CLINIC**—Call for information about our counseling services:

Weirton Medical Center  
Medical Office Building  
651 Colliers Way, Suite 412  
Weirton, WV 26062  
Phone: (304) 723-3423  
Fax: (304) 723-3426  
E-mail:  
admin@  
familyconnectionsinc.org

**BROOKE PLACE**—Call for a referral for residential group treatment for girls:

P.O. Box 348  
Tent Church Road  
Colliers, WV 26035  
Phone: (304) 527-3303  
Fax: (304) 527-3306  
This facility is funded in part under an agreement with the Bureau of Children and Families, WV Department of Health and Human Resources  
Email:  
brookeplace@  
familyconnectionsinc.org



Cathy Ann Sobel passed away on Thursday, May 21, 2015 after a 2 1/2 year illness. She knew all about girl power. Long before she associated herself with this agency's group home for adolescent girls, she had a good view of the glass ceiling. Fresh out of high school, she was hired as an office manager in a county office of the WV Department of Highways. At that time she was the sole female employee in a sea of hard hats and sometimes harder heads. She had to immediately learn when to roll with the punches and when to stand up and stand firm. Her best defense, she came to understand, was to become knowledgeable about the work the men were performing. She earned a senior engineering technology certificate. She learned about road grades, highway materials, barrier construction, the difference between a slip and a slide, negotiating contracts, routing traffic, blueprints, managing detours, hazardous waste spills, topography, preparing a site for work, and communicating with colleagues, supervisors, and executives in Charleston – almost exclusively male. She bumped along and bumped heads and received promotions by virtue of her job expertise in road construction and contracts and her personal expertise in getting over or getting around or just plain destroying roadblocks. One of those roadblock detonations occurred when she gave her deposition as part of a class action suit brought against the WVDOH by women working in the field. The women won back wages.

Having so much fun running headlong into glass ceilings and generally blowing things up, one might wonder why she ever retired. She did though, and it should not surprise that nothing about retirement changed her persevering and determined nature.

As a board member since 2003, and President from 2006 to 2010, she made the same commitment to the girls at the group home and the organization as a whole as she made to herself: Push past the roadblocks and seize opportunities to grow.

She embraced the spirit of volunteerism in words and actions. She was active in church and community clubs for years, often taking a leadership role or additional responsibilities as a member. The girls had a special place, though. She was no stranger to the group home, dropping things off, hauling something away. She was always on the lookout for some activity, community connection, or chance for them to give back that will entertain and raise their positive profile. She must have kept a pair of scissors in her pocket because whenever she read an article that potentially impacted the agency or the girls she cut it out and send it along. If she had lived in an area that offered a broadband connection instead of dial-up, we would have been getting daily email attachments.

As a member of the fund development committee and chair of its auxiliary, she made certain the groups had community representation. Indeed, the auxiliary is one hundred percent volunteer, and gathered members and momentum by word of mouth – mostly hers. She had a vision for fund raising events that not only raised money but raised awareness of this agency’s role in the community. She understood and articulated why these things go hand and hand. She honed her elevator speech and delivered it frequently to civic groups, businesses, and anyone who asked her what she had been doing since retiring. She once famously gave her elevator speech to her fellow card players as she was gathering in her winnings from a hand of poker. One of them was so taken by the idea of the winnings going to the group home that she wrote out a check then and there.

When the agency’s annual fundraising dinner teetered on the edge of being cancelled with only weeks to go, she took on the challenge with her newly formed auxiliary and didn’t just pull it off, but made it an entertaining and successful event.

We think about our girls making their treatment journey along a path that puts them in contact with a scarecrow who helps them use their head for better decisions, a tinman who helps them love themselves and care about others, and a lion who reveals their own courage. All of this naturally takes place along a certain yellow brick road. How fortunate we were to have had Cathy Sobel, a Champion of Children who knew how to keep that road in good repair.

### **In Memory of Cathy Sobel by:**

**Robert and Donna Manypenny**

**Joanne Dobrzanski**

**Bernice and Gary Pitcock**

**Jean and Rick Bartholow**

**Peter and Mary Lou Kerr**

**James and Sharon Ulbright**

**Laura Chamberlain**

**Dorothy Swearingen**

**Louise Hartung**

**Carol Klakos**

**Mike and Teresa Swan and Family**

**Carolyn and Alvin Schafer**

**Lawrence and Nancy DeRosa**

**Roseann Costello**

**Rosemarie and Robert Cieslak**

**Connie and James Gettinger**

**Barbara and Robert Brauch**

**Jim and Susan Gracie**



Cathy Sobel on left with her sister Lynn Swan

## RESIDENT'S NEWS

**Prom 2015** The theme of this year's Brooke High Prom was "Midnight Masquerade." The prom was held at the American Serbian Center and was open to all eligible 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who met the attendance and behavior requirements. Two of our lovely girls attended the dance complete with masquerade masks and danced the night away.

**Graduation** The end of the school year is here. The last day for seniors was May 19<sup>th</sup> with graduation being held on May 28<sup>th</sup>. Brooke Place had one person graduating from both Brooke High School (with a diploma) and Brooke Place with her Ruby slippers. Residents and staff shared a beautifully decorated cake in honor of her graduation. Congratulations JC and best wishes for your future.

**Amazing Grace Pillowcases** At a recent life skills group, residents shared their sewing skills by making pillowcases for a local nursing home and children's pillowcases for Pittsburgh Children's Hospital and even made a personal one for themselves. Many of the girls surprised staff and instructors with their interest and enthusiasm. Amazing Grace's goal is to make one million cases to share with Veterans, hospitals, hospices and ill children. Their motto is to share a "little sunshine", one case at a time.

## AUXILIARY NEWS

**DINNER/DANCE** On Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, Brooke Place held its eighth annual "There's No Place Like Home" dinner/dance. The residents helped the auxiliary decorate the Serbian American Cultural Center the night before in the theme of the Wizard of Oz. The girls blew up balloons the color of the rainbow and designed a beautiful arched rainbow for our guests to enter the hall. Members of the community, staff and friends of Family Connections enjoyed an evening of dinner and dancing to music provided by DJ "Mr. Moe and the Music Machine". A huge thank you to all the hard work of the auxiliary, all those who donated and our sponsors for the great success of our event. All proceeds will benefit the residents of Brooke Place.

**CAR/BIKE SHOW** Family Connections second annual car show will be held Saturday, July 18, 2015 in the parking lot of Mercy Baptist Church located at 3474 Pennsylvania Avenue in Weirton. Registration begins at 11:00 AM with the show from 12-3 PM. Dash plaques will be given to the first fifty registrants. There will be a Chinese auction, Door prizes, food and music. For more information call Gary Williams at 304-479-7663 or Gary Pitcock at 304-797-8374.

### MISSION STATEMENT

*Family Connections is committed to helping individuals function to the best of their abilities by engaging the resources that exist naturally within their family and community. Interventions provided by Family Connections are theory-based and are guided by the principle that the individual is best treated within the context of their family. Family Connections is dedicated to the care, welfare, and respect of families and the individuals who comprise them.*

*family connections, inc.*

P.O. Box 348

Colliers, WV 26035



*By giving a contribution in memory of or in honor of a family member or friend, many generous people have found a way to express their caring spirit while investing in the lives of those served by Family Connections.*

**In Memory of Emma Barnabei by  
St. Joseph The Worker Rosary Group**

**In Honor of the Brooke Place Staff  
By Yvonne Dobrzanski**

**In Honor of Jean Bartholow by Mr. and Mrs. John Horvath,  
Tammy Curry, Jeff Six and Mr. and Mrs. Todd Lancaster**

**In Honor of The Fund Development Auxiliary by  
Joanne Dobrzanski**