

“Auld Lang Syne”

Scottish poet Robert Burns reminds us “For the sake of old times,” we bid farewell to the old year and ring in the new, and we remember long-standing friendships.

We thank the friends of CFSNEMI for your ongoing support. We recognize both the foundation grants, such as Besser Foundation, Community Foundation of NE Michigan, and WK Kellogg Foundation, as well as the community-based grants, such as the Oscoda Area United Way and the Ta-was-Whittemore-Hale United Fund.

To your health, as you “take [another] cup of kindness” in 2015!

January is National Human Trafficking Awareness Month

Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery. It is defined as the “recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining of a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts through force, fraud, or coercion.”

Human Trafficking in the United States

- Nearly 300,000 American children are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation. (US Department of Justice)
- The average age of entry for children victimized by the sex trade industry is 12 years. (U.S. Dept. of Justice)
- Approximately 80% of human trafficking victims are women and girls and up to 50% are minors. (U.S. State Department)
- Girls are sold for \$400 an hour. (Shared Hope International)
- Trafficking cases have been reported in all 50 States. (US State Department)
- 1 out of 5 pornographic images is of a child. (US Department of Justice)
- As many as 2.8 million children run away each year in the US. Within 48 hours of hitting the streets, one-third of these children are lured or recruited into the underground world of prostitution and pornography. (The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children)
- “The state department estimates in West Michigan alone, there are 2,400 minors for sale at any given time, mostly on the internet.” (Rebecca McDonald, founder and president of Women At Risk International)

What You Can Do to Help End Human Trafficking

- Know the facts about human trafficking.
- Raise awareness of human trafficking by sharing what you learn with all women, especially those who are vulnerable to being trafficked.
- Keep learning about trafficking, its victims and its survivors. Don’t support businesses that you know are a part of human trafficking.
- If you come in contact with a victim of human trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-3737-888 OR the Neline at 1-800-999-9999.

Child & Family News

January 2015

Volume 3 Issue 1

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UPCOMING EVENTS

2nd Annual
Walk Me Home
5K Walk/Run
May 2nd, 9 :00 a.m.
Duck Park, Alpena



Operation Good Cheer

Liz Jones, Foster Care Supervisor

On December 6, 2014, several people from Child & Family Services of NE Michigan, Inc. (CFSNEMI), Holy Cross and the Alpena Department of Human Services met at the Alpena Regional Airport to receive and disperse Christmas packages destined for children and youth in foster care. Helpers were just a link in a complex chain of events that involved hundreds of volunteers across Michigan – all motivated by compassionate hearts desirous of bringing joy to vulnerable children.



Eric Seals/Detroit Free Press

Christmas gifts -- all 13,521 of them -- sit in large piles waiting for over 200 volunteers from Metro Detroit to help load them into semi trucks. Inside the hanger at Pentastar Aviation at the Oakland County International Airport the gifts would later be destined to other cities in Michigan for foster kids.

The airplanes started arriving at the airport around 9AM. There were a total of 5 planes that came to Alpena carrying gifts for each agency. Packages were marked with the child’s name and agency code. All of the volunteers that were present assisted the pilots in unloading the gifts. Then we assisted one another in distributing the packages among

the three agencies that were present. We all worked as a team filling vehicles to the brim.

During the time between airplanes arriving and leaving, several volunteers met in a small break room to share breakfast, coffee and hot chocolate, along with stories of Operation Good Cheer adventures in the past. Pilots were offered breakfast and a hot beverage. Some agreed to participate while others had to hurry back to Pontiac, Michigan to fill their planes up again with gifts and head to another airport.

The Operation Good Cheer program, sponsored by Child and Family Services of Michigan, has spanned over 40 years and has brought holiday cheer to hundreds of children in foster care, group homes, residential treatment centers and those children that are in the process of being adopted. We want to thank our local community for donating financially to this cause.



CFS's own Felonie Keller-Somers unloads gifts at the Alpena Regional Airport

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BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

Child & Family Services of Northeast Michigan, Inc. is a private, non-profit agency providing services to children and families in need.



Feel free to stop by the agency to learn more about the programs and services our agency offers! We are open Monday - Friday

Board of Directors

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Juvenile Detention Diversion

Paul Mocerì, Executive Director

Robert was a 16 year old juvenile delinquent. But hardly a typical juvenile delinquent! He was the son of the Chief of Police in the most affluent municipality in the state (not Michigan). As a juvenile diabetic, he was having difficulty adjusting to adolescence. He felt different, and he wasn't fitting in. So he acted out and was convicted of crimes against the family. How challenging it must have been for the Chief of Police to press charges against his own son and to hear the judge announce, "Guilty as charged" and the bang of the gavel as it hit the sounding block. What was to happen to Robert? He may very well have ended up in juvenile detention where he would have been subjected to negative influences that might have caused more harm than good. But instead, he ended up in a Juvenile Detention Diversion program that kept him in the community and provided him with intensive case management services. He told me, "My parents love me too much." It wasn't until I became a parent myself that I began to understand what he meant. They were concerned about his well-being by insisting that he check his blood-sugar levels twice a day and inject himself with insulin if required. But he was having a hard time attending to the self-management of a disease that caused him to feel like an outsider at school. He was placed in a Specialized Foster Home where the foster

parents were trained to understand Robert's fears and manage his reactive behaviors, while closely monitoring his diabetes. Within a year, he was returned home to his family. There are some happy endings.

Last month, an editorial appeared in The New York Times called: "Kids and Jails, a Bad Combination." It talked about the success of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, the landmark law passed by Congress in 1974. The essence of the act is a set of protections for young people caught up in a criminal justice system built for grown-ups. In the past, juvenile offenders were routinely locked up with adults, exposing them to physical and sexual abuse and making them more likely to break the law again when they got out. In addition to keeping juvenile offenders separated from the adult offenders, the Act also bars the counterproductive practice of locking up children for status (minor) offenses like skipping school, running away or violating a curfew — behavior for which no adult would be punished.

According to The Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, a large-scale diversion program designed by Michigan State University, the Adolescent Diversion Project, includes juveniles accused of serious criminal acts and juveniles with status offenses.



Outcomes show that diversion can be safely extended beyond status offenders. Although most of the offenders in the program admitted to criminal acts, the diversion program reports lower recidivism (re-offense) rates than those reported for normal court-processed cases.

The results speak for themselves. Even as the nation's adult prison population has skyrocketed eightfold since 1970, to 2.4 million, the number of juveniles involved in the justice system has dropped by 30 percent since 2002.

The New York Times editorial references a survey released in November by the Pew Charitable Trusts, in which the vast majority of respondents said they would rather see young people in trouble with the law get treatment, counseling and supervision than be jailed. More than eight in 10 said juveniles should never be incarcerated for skipping school or running away.

Maybe you could help us improve on these outcomes even further. Call today to inquire how you can become a foster parent with the Specialized Foster Care program. It can be challenging, but the rewards are great, including a substantial reimbursement rate.

Foster Family Recruitment

Meg Nisbet, Development Director



We welcome the Wetzel/Bolozko family and the Gehl family as licensed foster families with Child and Family Services or Northeast Michigan. Andre Wetzel and Sylvia Bolozko live in Alcona County and are brand new foster parents. Pat & Mary Gehl live in Ogemaw County and have renewed their license after having fostered and adopted two brothers from foster care several years ago.

Currently, two other families have had their home studies completed and sent

to B-CAL (Bureau of Child & Adult Licensing), and we are awaiting approval of their license applications. Another six families should have their home studies completed by the end of January, which will double the number of foster homes we have available for foster children.

Two other families, scheduled to be licensed by the end of February, will be part of our new Respite Care team. We have contracted with Northeast Michigan Community Mental Health to provide respite care for

children with developmental disabilities. Respite care offers a short term break, such as a weekend, for full-time caregivers.

Foster family recruitment continues throughout our service region. The New Year has us focusing recruitment efforts in Montmorency County. We received a grant from the Northeast Michigan Community Foundation to support our recruitment and licensing efforts in Montmorency County.

Adoption Update

Felonie Keller-Somers, Adoption Supervisor



November was National Adoption Month. CFSNEMI's Adoption Department partnered with the Alpena Family Court and the Alpena Department of Human Services to celebrate National Adoption Day by hosting an event to honor children and families who have been adopted or are working towards adoption. Among the guest speakers were two young ladies, including Jessica Bilyeu, for whom CFSNEMI had previously completed adoption services. They shared their journey and experiences, which was extremely moving. Jessica said, "[Speaking tonight] was a very good experience and provided some closure for me that I needed." In addition, we honored Michelle Burns, a former foster mother that fostered over 300 children before her untimely death. In memory of her legacy, the Michelle Burns Make A World of Difference Award was presented to Mike and Robbin Newberry and the Honorable Thomas J. LaCross for their commitment and dedication to helping children and families in our community.

On National Adoption Day, CFSNEMI finalized two of the three adoptions that occurred in Alpena County.

In 2014, we finalized 12 adoptions. We are excited about new opportunities in 2015! We look forward to celebrating more happy endings on Adoption Day 2015!



HELP
SUPPORT
CHILD AND
FAMILY

SERVICES OF
NE MICHIGAN

Send a check or
money order today!

BECOME A
SUSTAINER

Through the advances of technology, a person or business can support their favorite charity by having money withdrawn automatically from their bank account on a monthly basis. If you are interested in supporting Child and Family Services of Northeast Michigan in this way, please call or stop by and we will guide you through this easy process to become a sustainer.

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DONATIONS
ARE TAX
DEDUCTIBLE