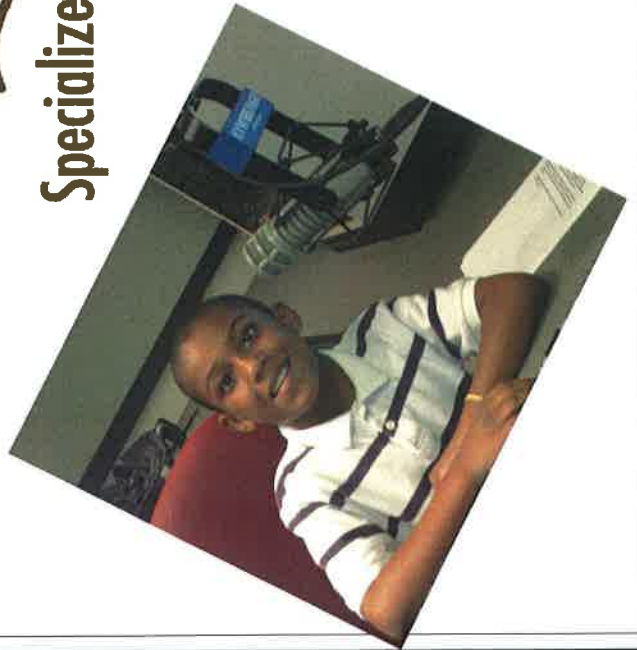




Specialized Foster Care, Kinship, & Adoption Services

# THE CHILDREN'S CHOICE



2012 ANNUAL REPORT

## MISSION STATEMENT

Children's Choice, Inc. is a Christian social service agency, which provides specialized community-based services. Children's Choice, Inc. serves as a bridge for individuals who are in need of the reintegrative process of family living.

Intensive individualized supportive services are provided to empower clients in achieving their highest potential.

As a response to changing needs in families and society, Children's Choice, Inc. seeks to be an agent of positive change with those we serve throughout the world.

## CORE VALUES

- To be committed to serve.
- To uphold Christian values.
- To provide and promulgate positive family environments.
- To promote family re-unification.
- To facilitate choices, respecting each individual's right to choose.
- To work in a team oriented approach.
- To provide for the physical, psychological and spiritual needs of others.
- To stimulate personal growth and self-determination.
- To be agents of faith.
- To encourage and enhance social consciousness.

## **Children's Choice is a proud member of the following organizations:**

- Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)
- International Foster Care Organization (IFCO)
- Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY)
- Pennsylvania State Foster Parent Association (PSFPA)
- Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Families (PCCYFS)
- William Glasser Institute

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Mr. Norman Robinson**  
Chairman of the Board  
*Retired*  
City of Philadelphia Police Officer  
Sicklerville, New Jersey



**Mrs. Jacquelyn Baldwin**  
Board Member  
*Retired from Occidental Chemical Company*  
Newark, Delaware



**Dr. Sheila D. Thompson**  
Secretary of the Board  
*Educational Psychologist*  
Glenn Dale, Maryland



**Mrs. Karen Webb**  
Board Member  
*President*  
Voice of Choice: Resource Parent Support Group  
York Springs, Pennsylvania



**Rev. Bernard Keels**  
Board Member  
*Chapel Director*  
Morgan State University  
Baltimore, Maryland



**Mr. Richard A. Hause**  
Board Member  
*Director, Forensic and Valuation Services*  
Grant Thornton  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



**Rev. Lawrence Crawford**  
Board Member  
*Senior Pastor*  
Foster Memorial Baptist Church  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



**Mrs. Christine Keels**  
Board Member  
*Supervisory Program Analyst*  
District of Columbia  
Court Services & Offender Supervision Agency  
Baltimore, Maryland



**Mr. Richard J. Devine**  
Board Member  
*Vice President/Commercial Relationship Manager*  
First Savings  
Pottsville, Pennsylvania

## STEWARDSHIP REPORT

In my childhood, I had a teddy bear named “Wilkins” who was a gift to me in more ways than one. He was with me in dark hours, such as when my family moved repeatedly, or when I was being sent to my room alone as a punishment. My teddy bear was also there when I celebrated birthdays, in middle school years when I hosted sleep-overs with girlfriends, then when I felt the rejection or self-hatred or anger so common to the terrible teen aged years. Many tears of joy, anger and childhood sorrow were absorbed by



this silent companion with the perpetual (sewn on) smile. He was never judgmental, never critical, and was an excellent listener as I poured out my hopes, dreams and frustrations. I really never outgrew Wilkins, but in young adulthood, I relegated him to a place among other stuffed animals on my bed. Then, as a young mother, I gifted him to my baby daughter, who loved him as I had.

Children’s Choice serves 1,000 children every day through our offices in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. All of these children are sent to us because they are neglected, abandoned or abused, or all three. Few of these children come to us having had someone who will listen to their hopes, dreams and frustrations. It is our task to revive hope in these children and teens, to show them how they can adjust to their family, how they can impact their own futures.

Our social workers, administrative staff and resource parents are all dedicated to this set of challenges. Although these dedicated people perform all the functions of my old teddy bear, they are not merely the passive, silent absorber of each child’s anguish and

sorrows, but are active forces in re-shaping the lives entrusted to them for a time. It is our hope that, having learned how a family can work well and how they can work well within their family, these children and youth can return to their birth families and actually help that family to interdigitate more completely or, if the family cannot receive them, go on to become part of a new family through permanent legal custodianship or adoption.

Like my teddy bear, resource families, support staff and social workers bear evidence of their work, getting a bit tattered emotionally, weary, often frustrated at the too-slow pace of administrative processes and too much paperwork, yet they persevere. Social workers shoulder the responsibility of a new child added to an already full calendar; administrators stretch a thin dollar even further; foster and kinship families welcome one more child into their homes. They all heed the Biblical admonition to “not be weary in well-doing” (Galatians 6:9).

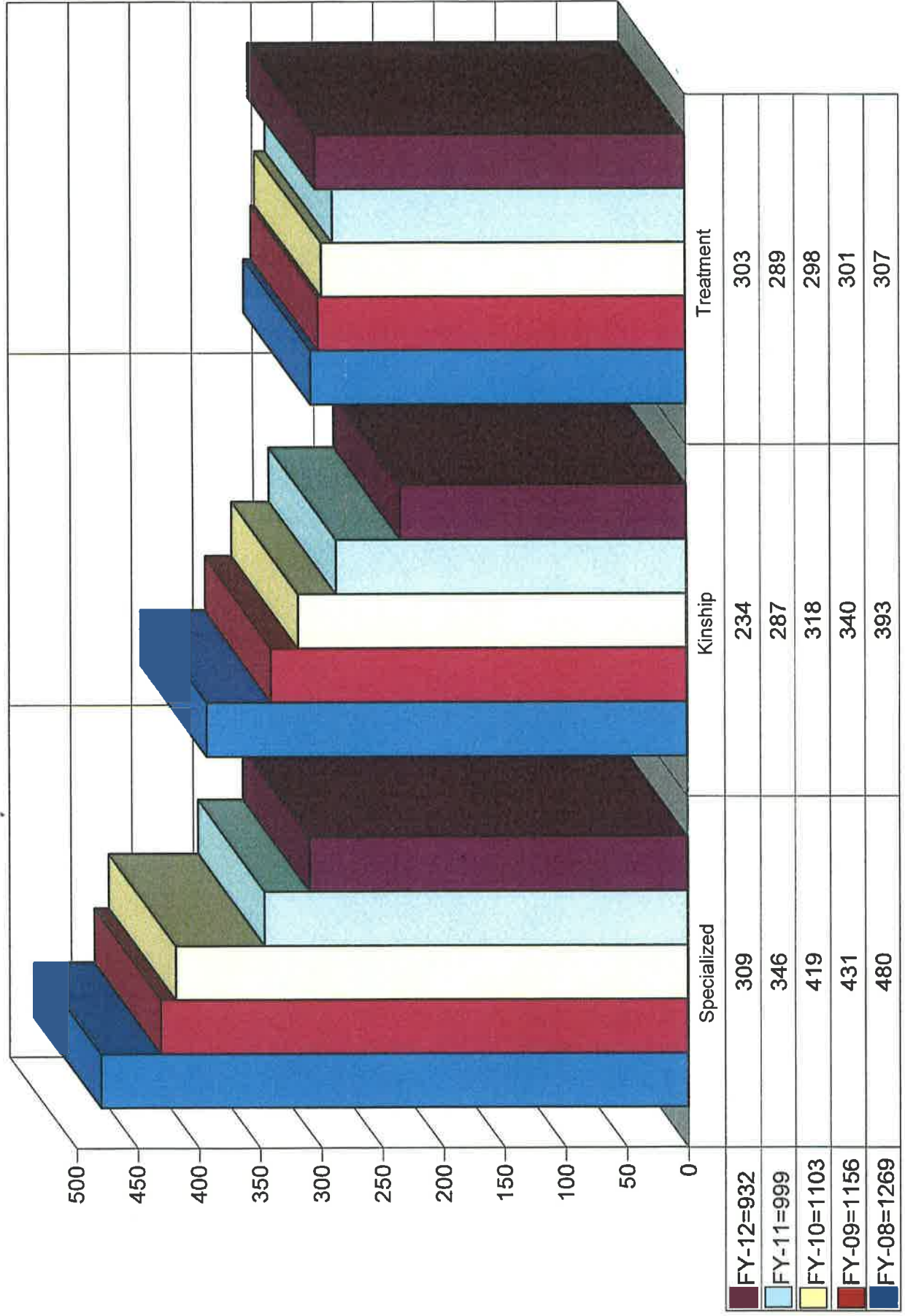
Please join me in praying daily that we can continue to gift these children so that they may benefit and so they can pass on to their children one day the love and attention they have received at our hands.



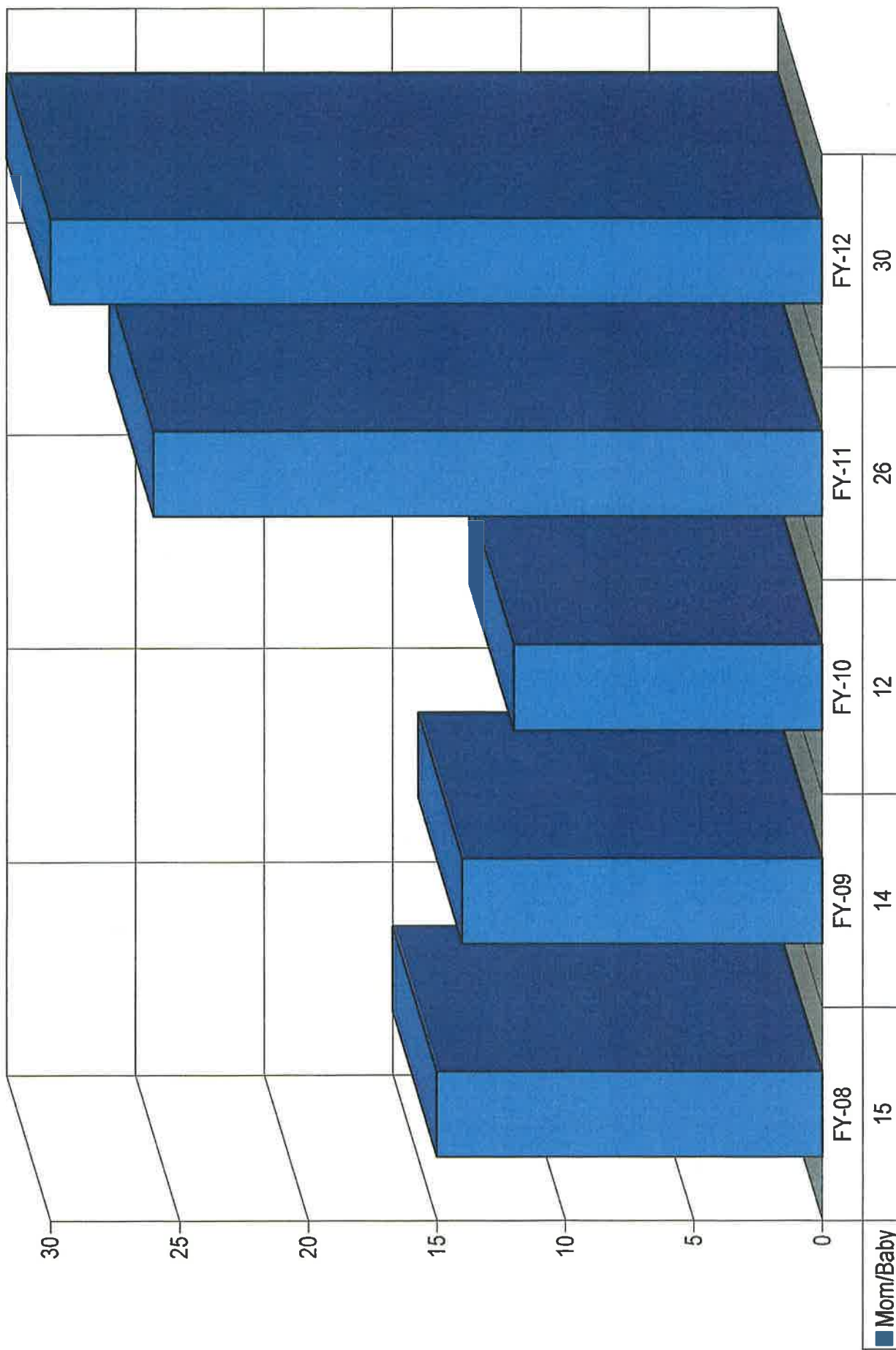
***Dr. Carolyn A. Eberwein***  
***President/Chief Executive Officer***

**Goal 1:**

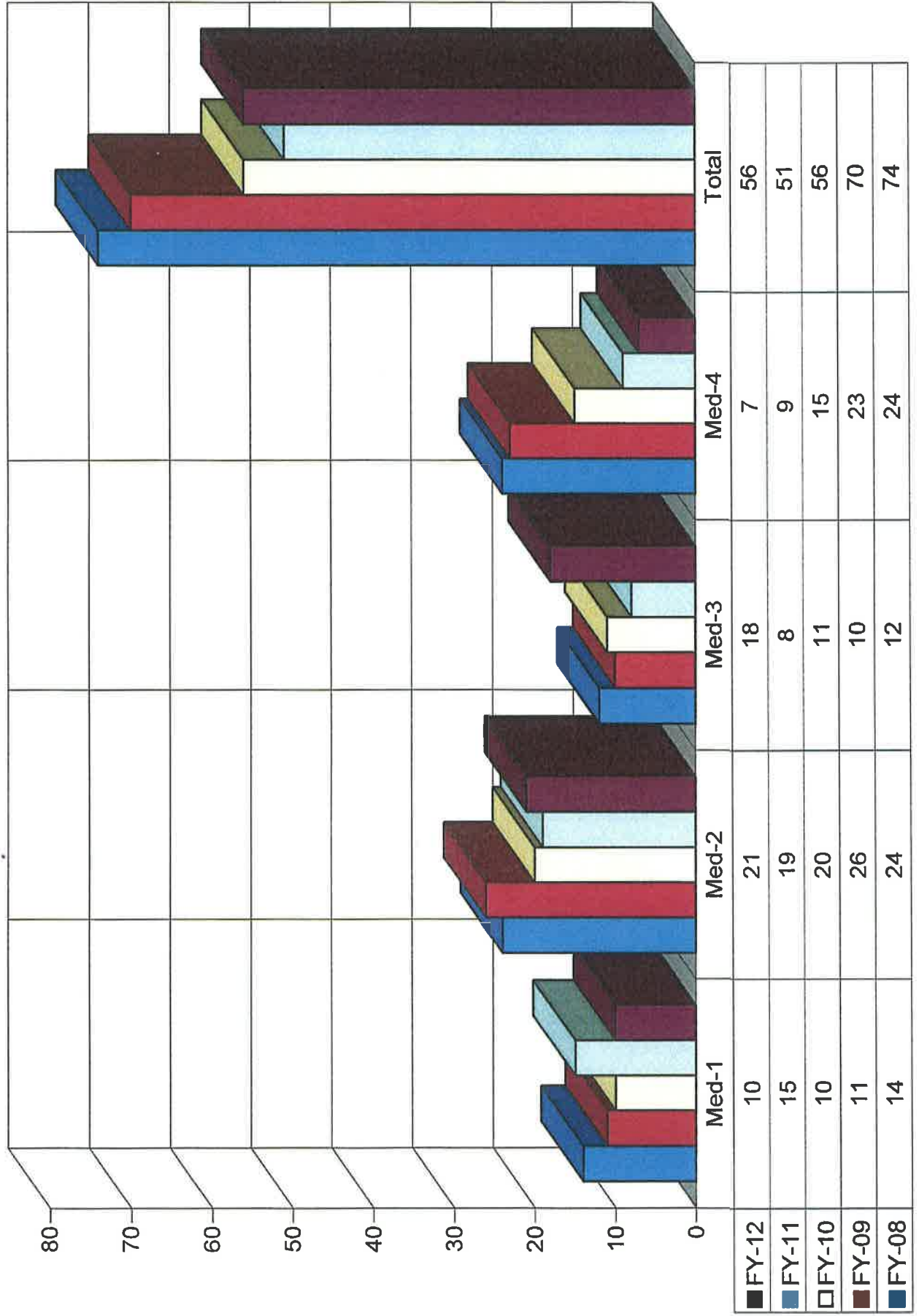
To increase the number of children served in specialized, kinship care and treatment care. Referrals of children of the specialized level of care, both in foster care and kinship care, have decreased, while referrals for treatment level services have increased.



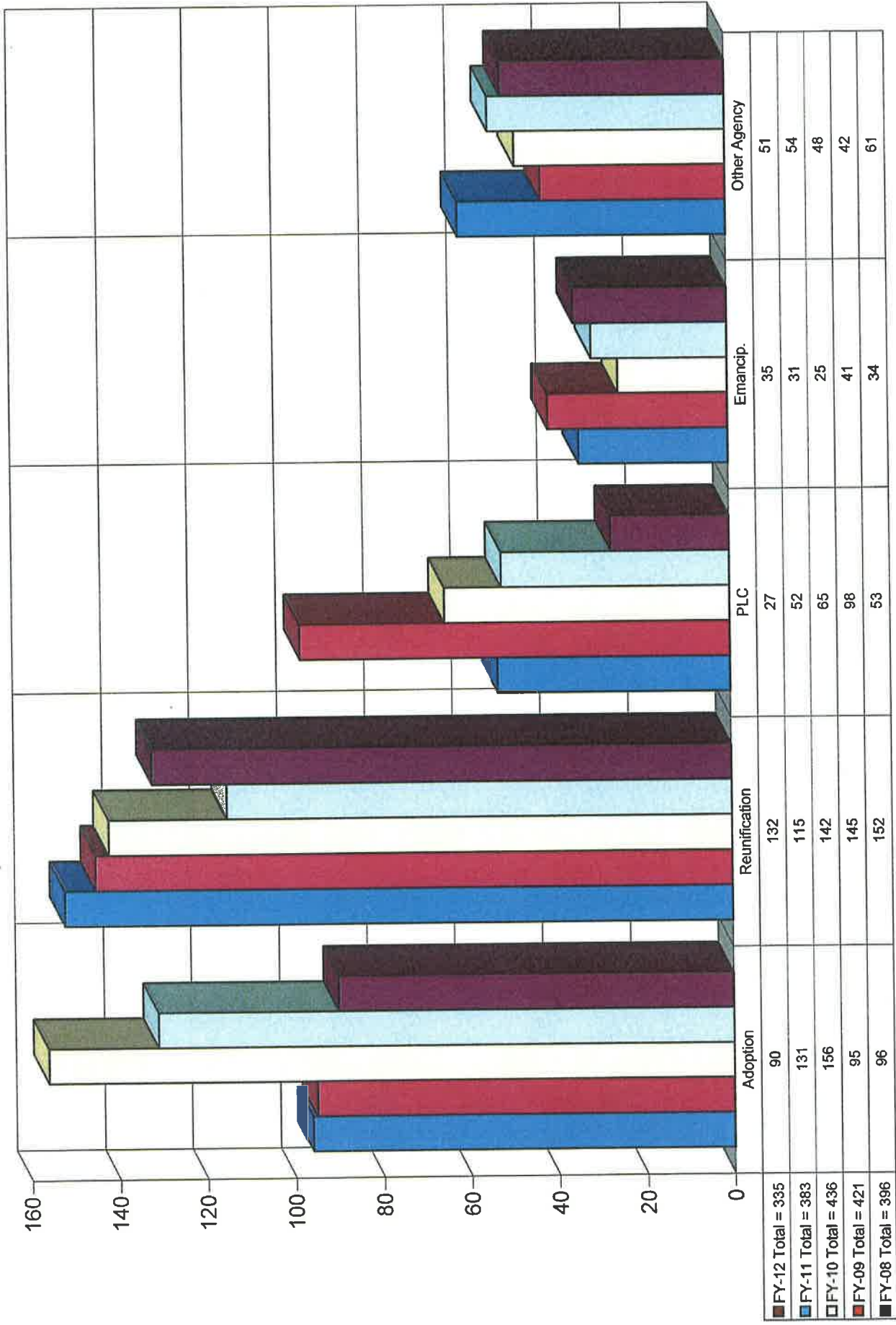
**Goal 2: To expand mother/baby services.**



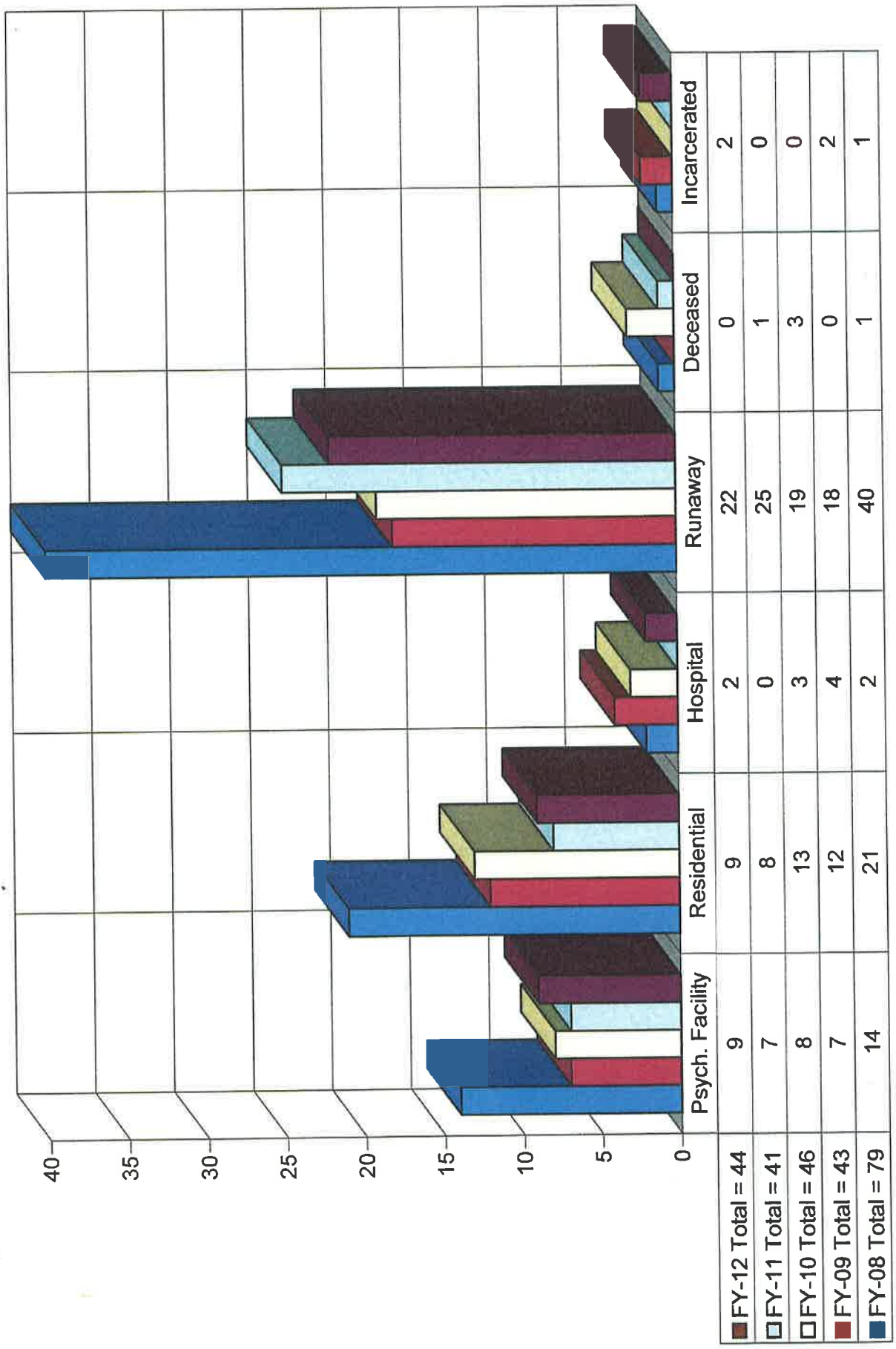
**Goal 3: To expand services to medically-fragile children.** The number of children needing medical foster homes has increased this year, a growth we anticipated by opening homes for medically fragile children in Philadelphia. Our Lewisburg, Pennsylvania office continues to serve machine-dependent children and those with multiple medical diagnoses.



**Goal 4: To increase the number of positive discharges.** The number of reunifications has increased. Permanent Legal Custodianship (PLC) is most often awarded to kinship families. As the number of kinship families has declined, so therefore, has the number of PLCs. Most of the children transferred to other agencies were reunified with siblings.

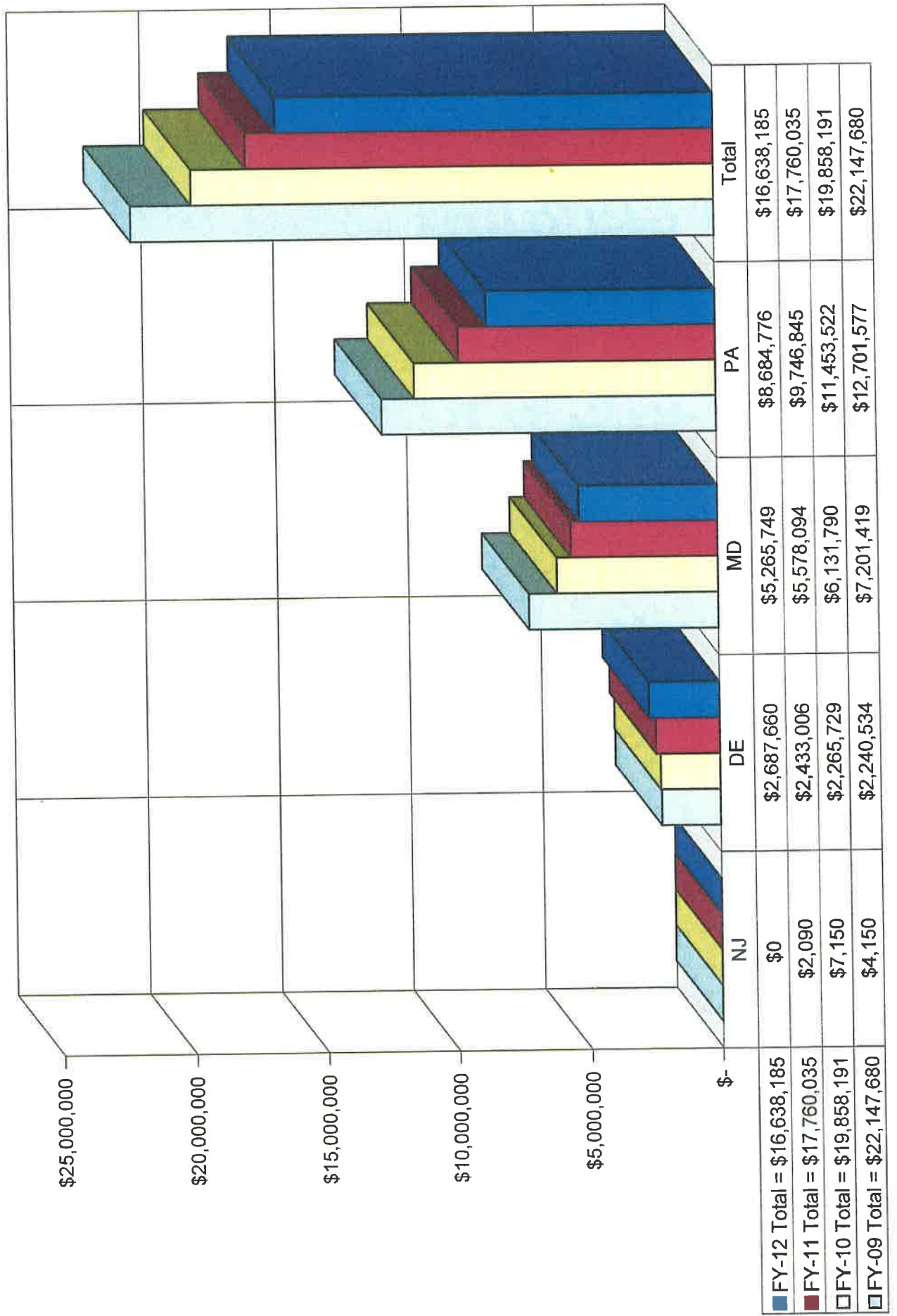


**Goal 5: To decrease the number of negative discharges.** The number of runaways remains constant, reflecting the number of older youth/teens we accept for services.





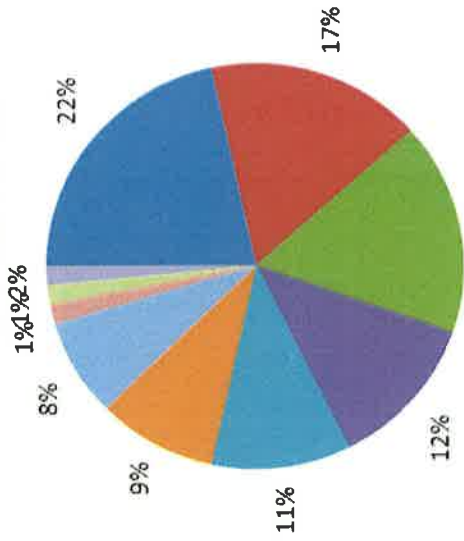
**Goal 6: To increase agency revenues.**



**Goal 7:** To increase staff retention rate.

### Why Would Anyone Leave Children's Choice's Employ?

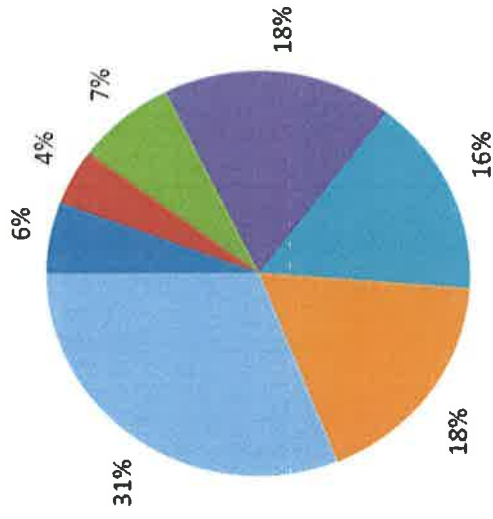
Fiscal Year 2012  
41% Turnover rate



- Performance Issues (14 persons)
- Career Change (11 persons)
- To care for Family (11 persons)
- Money (8 persons)
- Spousal Relocation (7 persons)
- Layoff/RIF (6 persons)
- School scheduling conflict (5 persons)
- Dissatisfaction with Job (1 person)
- Death (Tracey Freeman)
- Retirement (1 person)

### Length of Employee Service in Years

Total Number of Employees: 158



- 20+ yrs (9 persons )
- 15 to 20 yrs (7 persons)
- 10 to 15 yrs (12 persons)
- 5 to 10 yrs (28 persons)
- 2 to 5 yrs (25 persons)
- 1 to 2 yrs (28 persons)
- Under 1 year (49 persons)

## THE VOICE OF CHOICE: RESOURCE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

The Voice of Choice is a dynamic Resource Parent Support Group representing all of the families of Children's Choice. All currently licensed Children's Choice resource parents are members of the VOC. We are proud to serve over 600 families in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey and Washington, D.C. We have a group that consists of representatives and alternates from every Children's Choice office. This is a very diverse group, which is a huge asset as we learn from each others' experiences and challenges.

All resource parents and staff are always welcome to attend our meetings. We meet quarterly at the main office in Bellmawr, New Jersey. Dr. Carolyn, our President/Chief Executive Officer, and Web Eberwein, our Chief Operating Officer, regularly attend these meetings, acting in an advisory capacity. Their presence allows resource parents a voice at the corporate level, which makes our support group very unique. One of the most informative parts of our meeting is the Representatives Forum, when representatives can voice their questions, concerns and ideas. We are also unique in that the sitting VOC President is appointed to the agency's Board of Directors for her time in office and is a voting member.

The VOC is funded primarily through resource family donations. We have several on going programs and activities that are made possible because of these donations. Every November we fund Santa's Workshops for each office so that children can enjoy shopping for gifts for their families. Each December VOC members along with staff, help to host a Christmas party at each office. We enjoy a meal, fellowship together and watch the children making crafts as well as receiving their Christmas gifts. These events are always well attended and enjoyed.

One of our biggest programs is our Scholarship Fund. We are especially proud of helping students pursue higher education. This year we were able to award a total of 5 scholarships of \$500.00 each.

The very first VOC cookbook "Cooking with Love" has been completed, we are selling them now by contacting us at [www.childrenschoice.org](http://www.childrenschoice.org) to order one or more. The funds earned will go to help fund projects and activities in the coming year.

The Voice of Choice has produced a DVD "Accused" that was made to educate families on the Abuse Allegation process. Each office has access to this DVD to share with a family in the event of an allegation. VOC representatives are available for support to families who may be going through an allegation or crisis. This DVD has proved to be a huge resource for our families!

We have had the opportunity to send representatives to the National Foster Parent Association and the State Resource Family Conferences. We believe strongly in having as much training as possible to help us better serve the children God has placed in our care. At these conferences parents are able to choose and attend the trainings that interest them and may directly benefit the children in their household. Attending conferences also allows resource families to connect with other families who do the same work we do, who believe and understand our mission. Families are able to share experiences, how challenges are handled and build lasting relationships.

We have had a very productive year. We look forward to serving in the coming year!



*Mrs. Karen Webb*  
*Voice of Choice President*

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Eighty-five performance-based contracting permanencies were consummated.



Twenty-six permanent legal custodianships were awarded by Pennsylvania courts.



Sibling groups totaling 330 children were placed together.

623 Pennsylvania children were cared for this year by 380 resource families.



Fifty-nine Pennsylvania adoptions were finalized.



Seventy-four Pennsylvania children were reunified with their parents.



Thirty mothers and their babies were kept together in foster families.



STATE OF DELAWARE



Thirty-six reunifications were achieved.



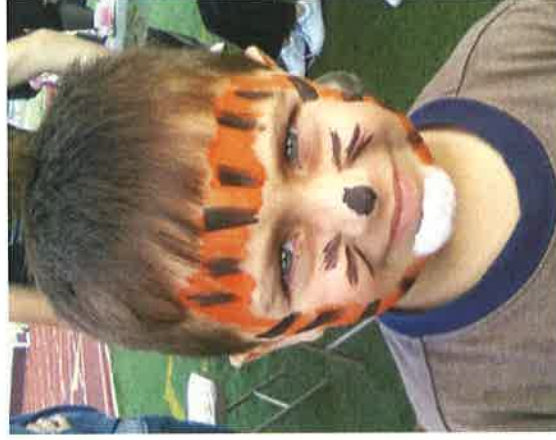
One hundred and forty-two children were cared for by 55 Delaware resource parents.



Fifty-six siblings were placed together this year, part of Children's Choice's emphasis on sustaining family ties.



One emancipation was effected.



We conduct Parent Empowerment classes and Parent Aide programs to help to prevent children going into placement.



Twenty-seven adoptions were finalized this year in Delaware.

STATE OF MARYLAND



Twenty-two emancipations occurred.



Twenty-two reunifications were achieved!



Our Mid Shore and Lower Shore respite programs provided 1,896 nights of respite and prevented entry into care for 64 children from 51 families.



One hundred and sixty-eight children were cared for by 109 Maryland resource parents.



Seventeen siblings were placed together with us this year.



WASHINGTON, D.C.



Twenty sibling groups were kept together.



We stabilize placements by referral to community resources.



One hundred and fifty-one resource parents served 265 children this year.



Thirteen permanencies were achieved.



75% of our homes are kinship, maintaining family ties.

**STUDENTS IN PLACEMENT**

To build the next generation of social workers, we work with universities and colleges to guide the field placements of students from Cairn University, Chesapeake College, Delaware State University, Eastern University, Rutgers, Salisbury State, Susquehanna, Temple University, the University of Maryland, the University of Southern California and Widener University.

These graduate and senior undergraduate students work closely with Children's Choice staff to learn what being a child welfare social worker really entails. Many of these students later join Children's Choice as staff. This year, Children's Choice sponsored 23 students, including 3 of our own staff who are taking MSW courses.



*Karen Park, MSW, Permenancy Director, supervises Faith Beckley a senior student in social work from Cairn University.*

**EMPLOYEE AWARDS**



*Cindy Ruby, Maryland State Director, presents the agency's 5-year service award, a certificate and a lithograph of Drivers' "Praying Hands", to Shelly Yost, Program Coordinator of Treatment Foster Care, College Park, Maryland.*

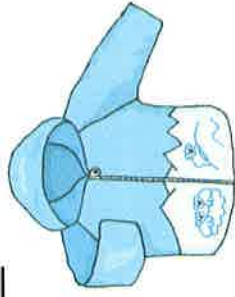
**TRAINING**



Our Director of Training, Adams Eberwein, coordinates training so that each clinical staff member achieves 40 hours per year of relevant training regarding birth parent interaction, the judicial process and life skills for children.

So they are prepared to meet the children's needs, resource parents are all dually trained as adoptive and foster parents with 24 hours of pre-service training, then 20 hours per year in positive discipline, child safety, crisis management, separation and loss, disruption and dissolution and other clinical subjects specific to the children for whom they are caring.

**OPERATION WARM**



*Dr. Carolyn, President/Chief Executive Officer, Sarah Sleister, Adoption Secretary, and her children receive samples of new winter coats for children donated by Operation Warm, thanks to Sarah having heard an offer on the radio, then soliciting "votes" for Children's Choice's foster and kinship kids to be the winners (recipients).*



**SPECIAL EVENTS (CONTINUED)**

**AGENCY PICNIC**

We ate, we tossed water balloons, we had a relay race, a tug-of-war, a watermelon-eating contest, we got our faces painted, and we had a great picnic!



*Our Master of Ceremonies,  
Web Eberwein, Chief Operating Officer.*



**LOCKS OF LOVE**



*Jenn Anad and her sister, Tricia show their new haircuts after donating their previously long red hair to Locks of Love, to be made into wigs for cancer patients.*

**CAREER FAIR**



**PAINTING PARTY**



*"When things get tough, the tough get going" (Rev. R. Schuller, 1999) so Wendy Atanacio, Children's Choice Delaware Adoption department and her supervisor, Karen Park, Agency Permanency Director, teamed up to paint offices to house the expanding Children's Choice adoption staff in Dover, Delaware.*

*Nicole Conrad, social worker at our Kent Island, Maryland office, answers questions from a prospective employee at the Children's Choice recruitment booth during a Career Fair at the University of Maryland.*

**SPECIAL EVENTS (CONTINUED)**

**BRING YOUR CHILD TO WORK DAY**



*Dr. Carolyn, already decorated with a ladybug, applies face-paint to Erin, daughter of the Chief Operating Officer.*



*Michele Ellis, Comptroller, and her daughter sort through magazines for collage pictures showing what Mom does at work.*



*Kids go on a parade, a tour of the Bellmawr headquarters.*



*Chris O'Donnell, Director of Information Technology, shows children how the agency uses computers.*



*Web Eberwein, Chief Operating Officer, explains his role in the agency.*



**CHRISTMAS**

*Local churches and merchants donate space, food and gifts so children have a wonderful Christmas.*



**FUNDRAISING**



*Each office raises money for Special Funds to help buy a prom dress, a graduation photo, a tombstone for a child's deceased mother, and other items not covered by contracts or donors.*

## TRACEY W. FREEMAN



This year, our Manager of Resource Parent Recruitment, Tracey Freeman was promoted to glory after 18 years at Children's Choice. We all watched her bravely cope with cancer for years before "going home."

Beginning as a secretary in a Children's Choice service office, Tracey spearheaded our Christmas donation program annually, arranging for "angel trees" to be placed in local businesses, decorated with angels each bearing the name and age of a child who needed a gift. Then she and her staff gathered and wrapped hundreds of donated gifts and delivered them to our Pennsylvania offices.

Tracey fulfilled a life-long dream as she graduated from college last year, with honors.

She always surrounded herself with children, so we continue that tradition by surrounding her here in a way we think she'd like to be remembered. Tracey exemplified the kind of servant leadership we believe God honors.



**CHILDREN'S CHOICE ENTITIES**

**Combined Statement of Activities  
Year Ended June 30, 2012**

	Children's Choice, Inc.	Children's Choice of Delaware, Inc.	Children's Choice of Maryland, Inc.	Choice Services International, Inc.
Support and revenue				
Public support:				
Contributions	\$10,866	\$5,000	\$10,966	\$ 7,500
	<u>10,866</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>10,966</u>	<u>7,500</u>
Revenues:				
Adoption-private pay	12,950	9,243	1,000	
Management service fees				2,192,918
Philadelphia Workforce Development	2,880			
Rental income				370,137
Other income	5,479	0	4,221	16,840
	<u>21,309</u>	<u>9,243</u>	<u>5,221</u>	<u>2,579,895</u>
Revenues:				
Program services:				
State of Pennsylvania				
Philadelphia County	6,931,420			
Delaware County	223,854			
Bucks County	-	8,941		
Montgomery County, Pa	2,191			
Lawrence County, PA	34,495			
Centre County	3,156			
Columbia County	2,445			
Northumberland County	9,255			
Juniata County	460			
Union County	1,939			
Montour County	12,544			
Schuylkill County	28,813			
Diakon Luthern Social Ministries (SWAN)	984,600			
State Offices of Medical Assistance	470,761		328,598	
Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Families				
Foster Care		1,639,924		
Interstate Compact		104,040		
Parent Aide Services		700,527		
Special Needs Adoption Services		219,985		
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene			2,500	
Maryland Department of Human Resources			4,139,325	
Worcester County Department of Health- Core Services Agency			57,300	
Washington D.C.-Child and Family Services- Monitoring			707,288	
Luteran Immigration & Refugee Services			14,551	
Child & Family Connections, Inc.				
	<u>8,705,933</u>	<u>2,673,417</u>	<u>5,249,562</u>	<u>-</u>
Total program services revenue	<u>8,738,108</u>	<u>2,687,660</u>	<u>5,265,749</u>	<u>2,587,395</u>
Expenses:				
Program services:				
Family foster care	6,476,497	1,884,220	4,332,299	
Aftercare Services	382,362			
Special respite programs			358,838	
Adoption and permanency services	782,090	164,630	250	
Total program services	<u>7,640,949</u>	<u>2,048,850</u>	<u>4,691,387</u>	<u>-</u>
Supporting services,				
Management and general	1,437,971	407,880	511,041	2,208,628
Rental	-	-	-	599,113
	<u>9,078,920</u>	<u>2,456,730</u>	<u>5,202,428</u>	<u>2,807,741</u>
Change in net assets	(340,812)	230,930	63,321	(220,346)
Gain (loss) on sale of property	-	-	-	(93,883)
Change in fair value of swap interest rate	-	-	-	16,211
Increase (decrease) in net assets	(340,812)	230,930	63,321	(298,018)
Net assets (deficit), beginning of year	1,563,459	432,220	733,493	(1,156,715)
Net assets, (deficit) end of year	<u>\$ 1,222,647</u>	<u>\$ 663,150</u>	<u>\$ 796,814</u>	<u>\$ (1,454,733)</u>

Unaudited Statement For Internal Use

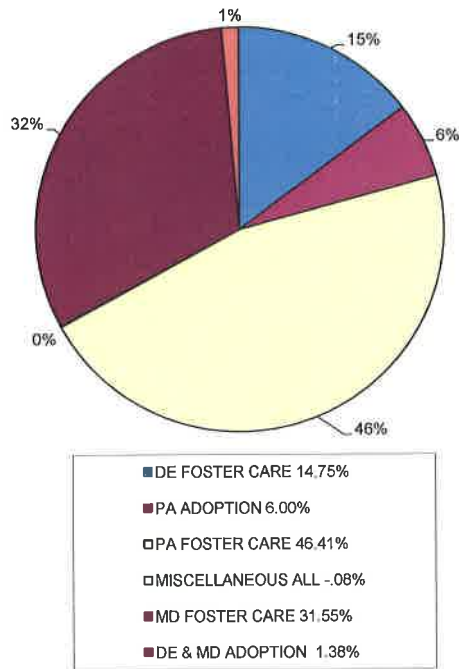
Children's  
Choice  
Property  
Two, Inc.

	Eliminations	Total
\$ -	\$ -	\$34,332
-	-	34,332
-	-	23,193
-	(2,192,918)	-
-	-	2,880
281,724	(651,861)	-
-	-	26,540
281,724	(2,844,779)	52,613

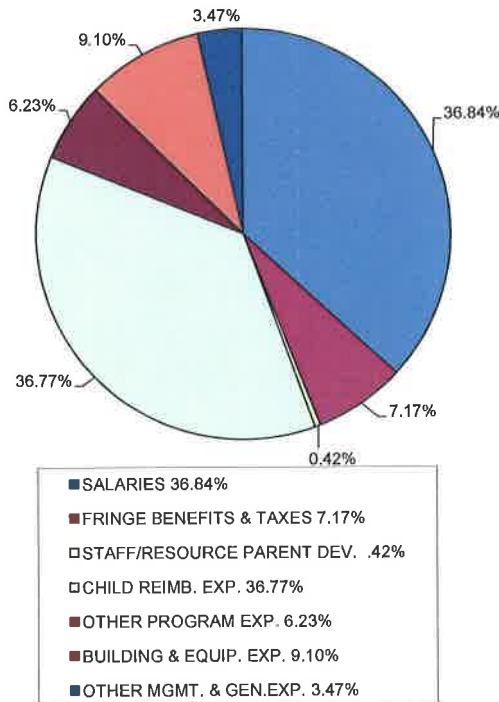
6,931,420  
223,854  
8,941  
2,191  
34,495  
3,156  
2,445  
9,255  
460  
1,939  
12,544  
28,813  
984,600  
799,359  
1,639,924  
104,040  
700,527  
219,985  
2,500  
4,139,325  
57,300  
707,288  
14,551  
-

-	-	16,628,912
281,724	(2,844,779)	16,715,857
-	(622,198)	12,070,818
-	(29,663)	352,699
-	-	358,838
-	-	946,970
-	(651,861)	13,729,325
-	(2,192,918)	2,372,602
205,276	-	804,389
205,276	(2,844,779)	16,906,316
76,448	-	(190,459)
-	-	(93,883)
-	-	16,211
76,448	-	(268,131)
24,982	-	1,676,802
\$ 101,430	\$ -	\$ 1,408,671

June 12  
YTD Revenue by Contract



June 2012 YTD Children's Choice Expenses



## BRANCH OFFICES

**Dr. Carolyn A. Eberwein, President/Chief Executive Officer**

Administrative and Training Headquarters

610-521-6270/856-754-0914

1-800-LA-CHILD



Specialized Foster Care, Kinship, & Adoption Services

## WE CAN USE YOUR HELP

We sincerely appreciate your interest in the Children's Choice agency, our children, staff and resource parents. As this report indicates, we are proud of what God has wrought through our efforts and we look forward to the coming year as a continuing opportunity to serve God by serving His children. If you would like to join us in this effort, we are always in need of resource parents, adoptive parents and economic support.

Gifts to the Children's Choice Foundation are tax deductible and will help us to provide even greater services to these entrusted to our care. Your gift of \$100  \$75  \$50  \$25  will be used to buy tickets to sporting events, museums, birthday and Christmas gifts, cribs and baby equipment. Thank you and may God bless you.

I truly hope you will accept this invitation to join our efforts to better our world by reaching out to a child in need.

Sincerely,

Carolyn A. Eberwein, Ed.D.  
President/Chief Executive Officer

## PENNSYLVANIA OFFICES

Central Pennsylvania (570) 522-1030  
Delaware County (610) 872-6200  
Germantown (215) 843-2222  
North Broad (215) 329-6191  
Oxford Avenue (215) 831-9164  
Spring Garden (215) 222-3046  
Treatment Foster Care (215) 551-3401

## DELAWARE OFFICES

Dover (302) 678-0404  
Newark (302) 731-9512

## MARYLAND OFFICES

Baltimore (410) 319-9681  
College Park (301) 313-9091  
Kent Island (410) 643-9290  
Salisbury (410) 546-6106

[www.ChildrensChoice.org](http://www.ChildrensChoice.org)  
and on our Facebook page

*Funded in part by the City of Philadelphia Department of Human Services, the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families, the Maryland Department of Social Services, and the Child and Families Services Agency of Washington, D.C.*