



# THE CHILDREN'S CHOICE

Specialized Foster Care, Kinship, & Adoption Services



**2011 ANNUAL REPORT**



## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **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.



**Mr. Norman Robinson**  
**Chairman of the Board**

*Retired  
City of Philadelphia Police Officer  
Sicklerville, New Jersey*



**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*



**Hudson Vanderhoff, II, Esq.**  
**Board Member**

*Assistant General Counsel  
Golden Living  
Glassboro, New Jersey*



**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*

## STEWARDSHIP REPORT



*“The Sower” by Vincent Van Gogh*

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus provides us with the parable of the sower, who cast seeds onto the wayside, where birds devoured them, onto stony ground where they had no place to take root and withered in the heat of the day, among thorns which choked them as they grew, then finally some fell onto the ground and brought forth good fruit.

A famous Philadelphia clergyman of the 1980s, Reverend Russell Conwell, Pastor of Baptist Temple out of which Temple University grew, gave a sermon entitled, “Tall Oaks From Tiny Acorns Grow.” I discovered this sermon many years ago when I was writing an article for the Germantown Historical Society about the founding of Temple Hospital where I then worked. I often remember this sermon title as I encounter our children. They are the small acorns that I am privileged to watch as they grow into saplings, as teens, then into oaks as adults. I urge our resource parents and our staff of social workers to remember Jesus’ parable and to make sure they are providing “good ground”, nurturing environments in which our children can grow. I urge them not to be stony or thorny ground that

might leave our children even more vulnerable, more at risk, but to equip them with all the skills they will need to return home or to live independently.

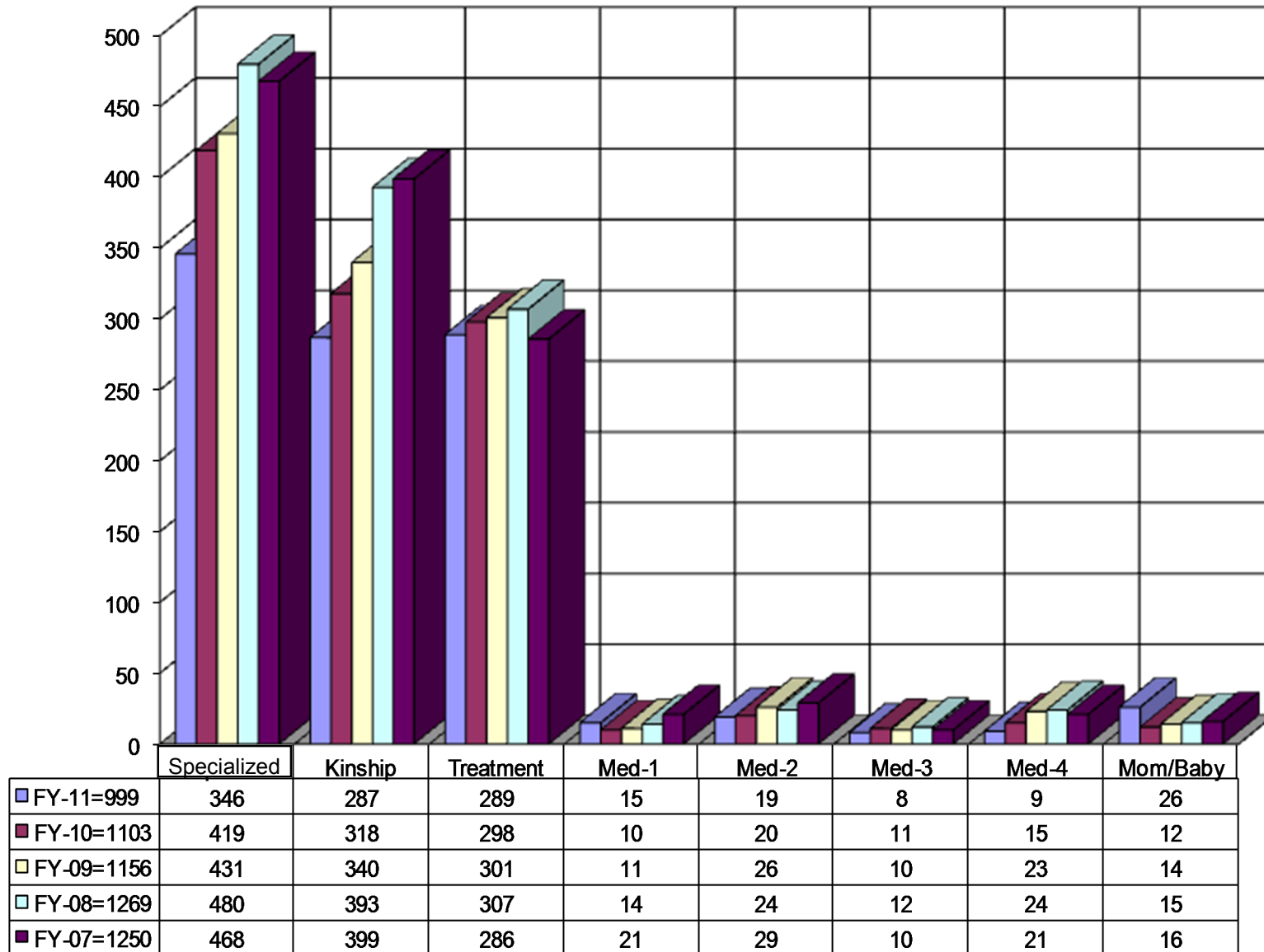
If we add the 999 children for whom we have cared this year to the thousands we have cared for since 1984, we are describing a veritable forest of tall oaks. This is work Jesus has called us to do. I thank God every day for the privilege of such meaningful work, for significant relationships with caring staff and loving foster families, for the restoration of hope for so many of our birth families and the joy of new family units formed through adoptions which we enable. Our forest is increasing every day as our tiny acorns take deeper root and spread their branches

When storms assail them and winds tug at them, I pray our Lord will use the time they have had with us as the foundation for their next part—the nurture of the next generation of “little acorns.”

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

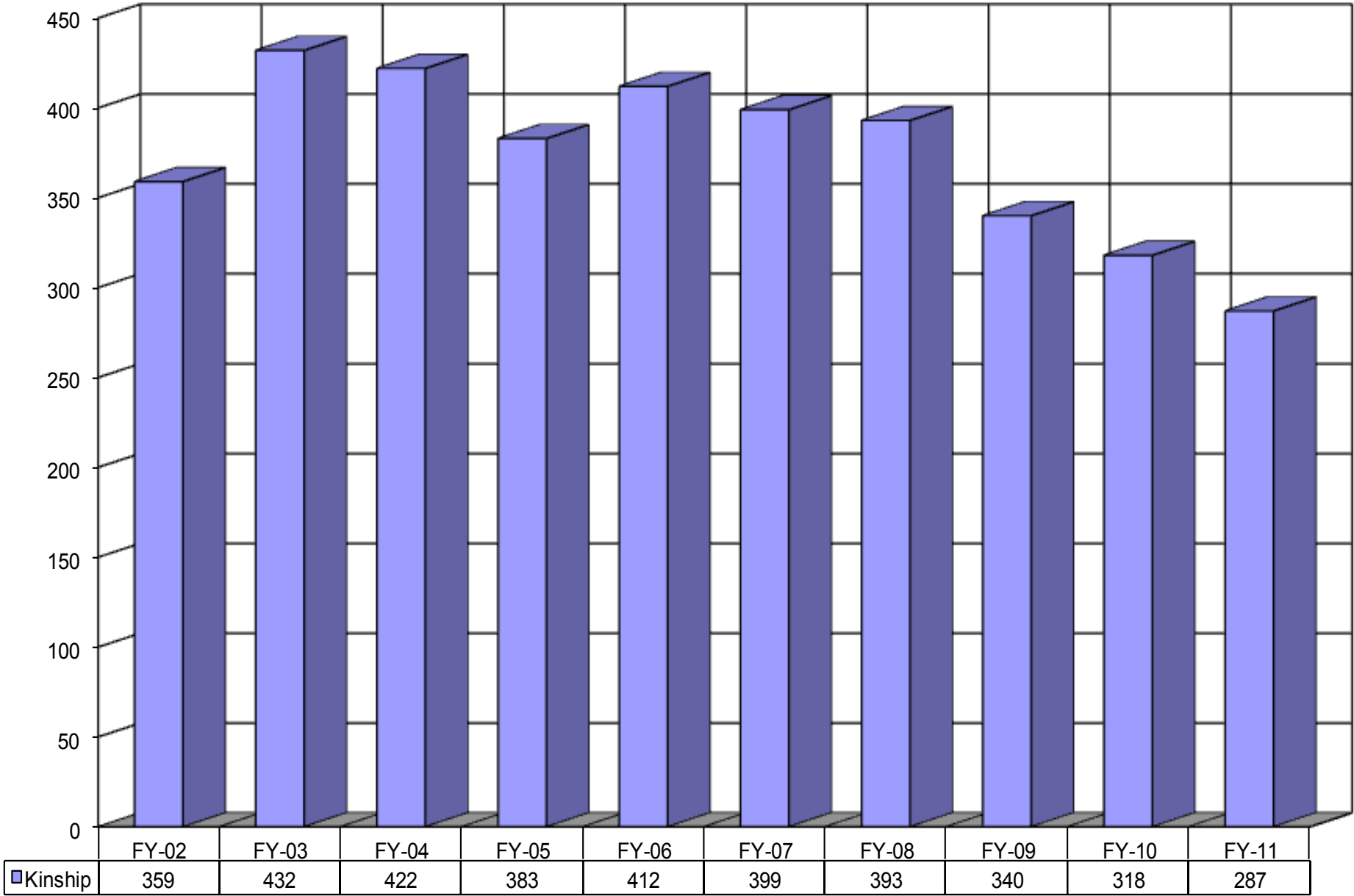


**Goal 1:** **To increase the number of children served:** While Maryland referrals have increased, Delaware saw a slight reduction in the number of referrals and Pennsylvania showed significant reductions corresponding to Philadelphia Department of Human Services' plans to decrease the number of children in out-of-home care in order to comply with Federal mandates. In Pennsylvania, mother/baby referrals doubled and medically fragile children continue to be referred, although in different medical categories than last year.

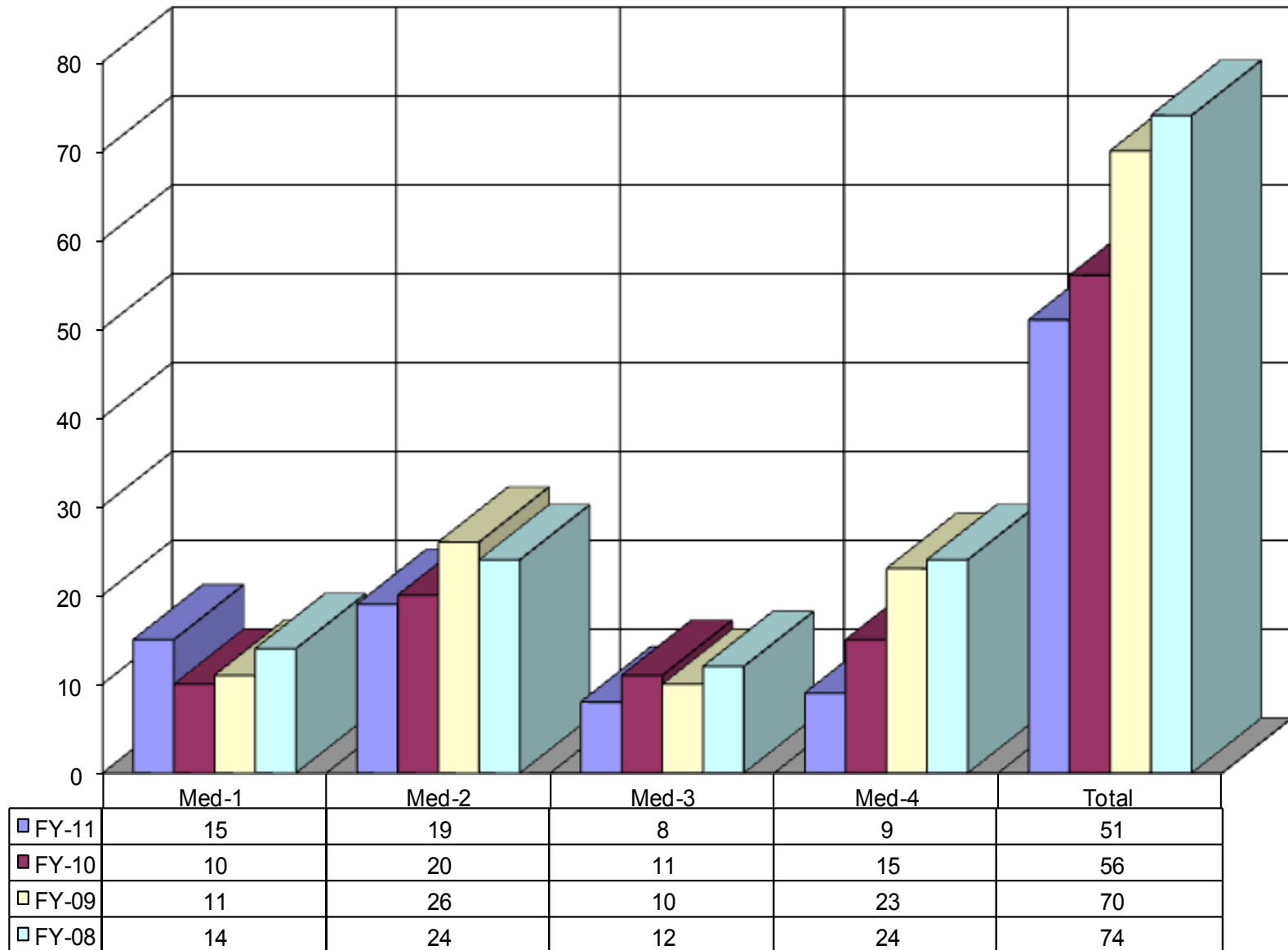




**Goal 2:**      **To expand kinship services:** Pennsylvania’s stated goal of reducing the number of children in care has resulted in fewer kinship placements.

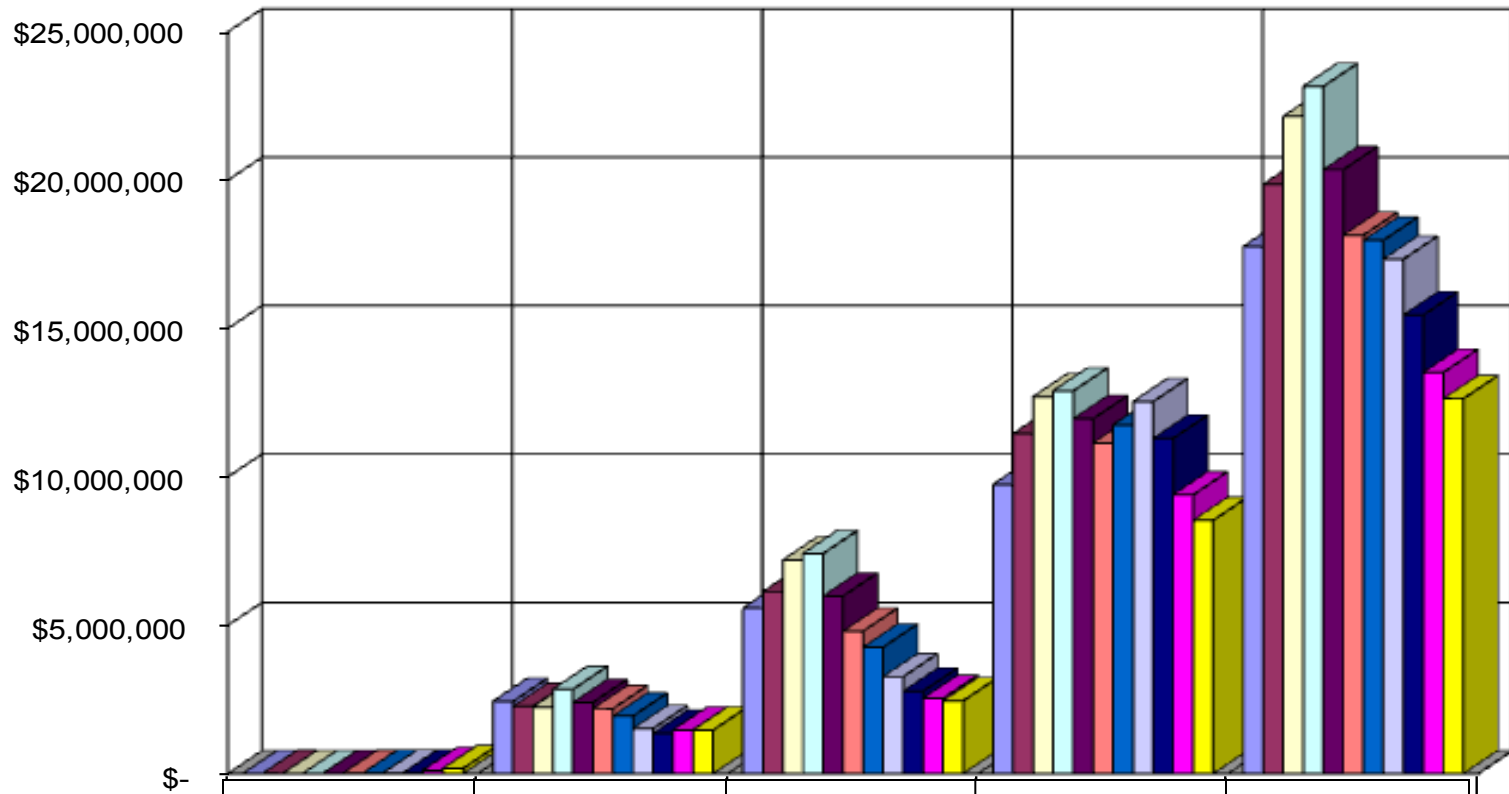


**Goal 3:** **To increase our services to medically fragile children:** Five fewer medical referrals were received this year. But we attribute this to the distance of our medical program from Philadelphia, our major referral source for medically fragile children. Therefore, to supplement our Lewisburg, PA program for children with medical needs, we have opened a Philadelphia medically fragile program which has already placed 9 children.





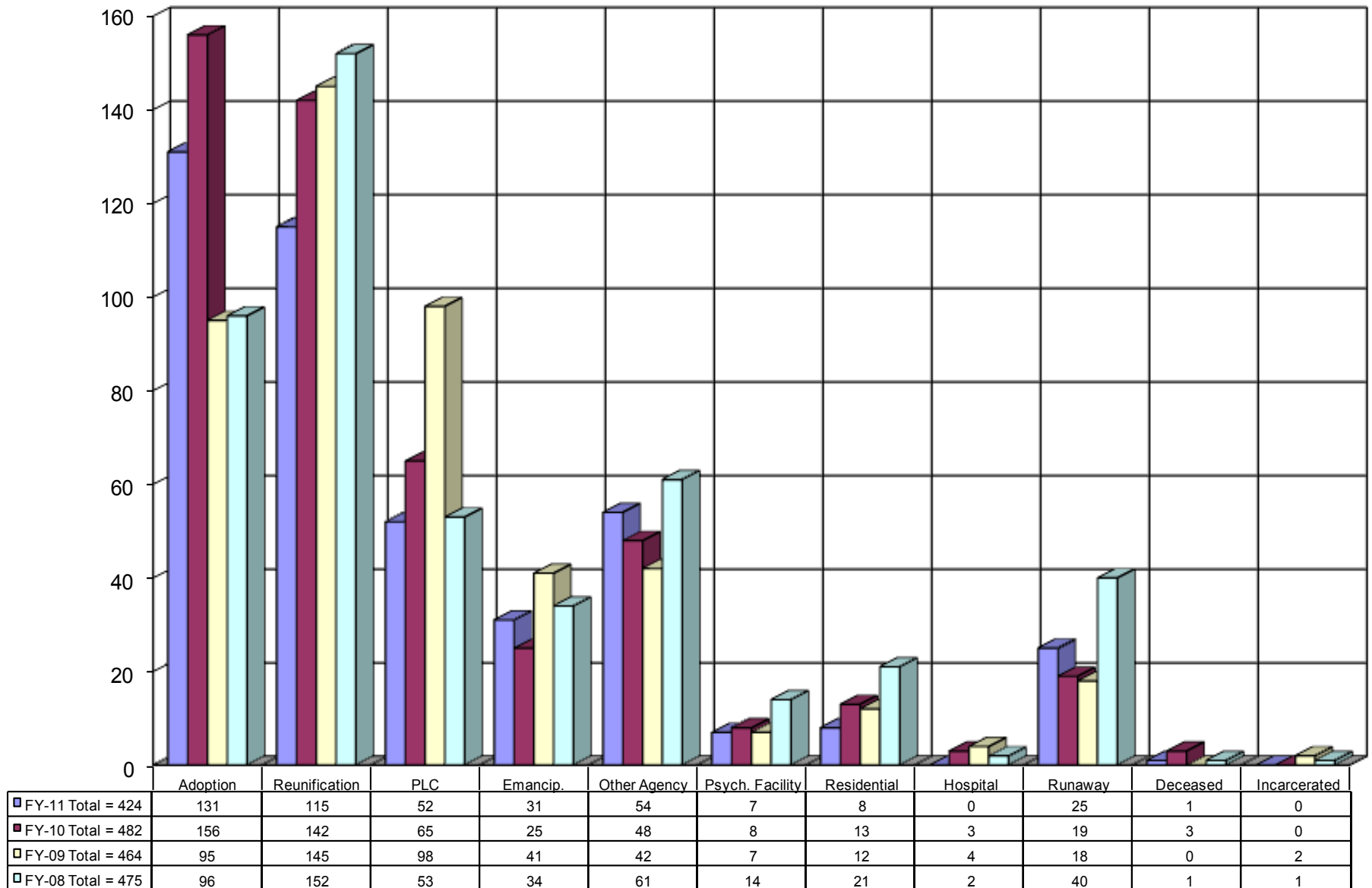
**Goal 4:** **To increase agency revenues:** To comply with Federal mandates, fewer children were placed in foster care, therefore revenue declined. Medical and Treatment programs have been expanded to increase revenue for the coming year.



	NJ	DE	MD	PA	TOTAL
FY-11 Total = \$17,760,035	\$2,090	\$2,433,006	\$5,578,094	\$9,746,845	\$17,760,035
FY-10 Total = \$19,858,191	\$7,150	\$2,265,729	\$6,131,790	\$11,453,522	\$19,858,191
FY-09 Total = \$22,147,680	\$4,150	\$2,240,534	\$7,201,419	\$12,701,577	\$22,147,680
FY-08 Total = \$23,161,609	\$2,686	\$2,842,850	\$7,418,696	\$12,897,377	\$23,161,609
FY-07 Total = \$20,354,761	\$3,189	\$2,402,532	\$5,987,392	\$11,961,648	\$20,354,761
FY-06 Total = \$18,144,224	\$7,317	\$2,190,529	\$4,800,864	\$11,145,514	\$18,144,224
FY-05 Total = \$17,973,734	\$15,289	\$1,942,637	\$4,262,707	\$11,753,101	\$17,973,734
FY-04 Total = \$17,337,798	\$13,647	\$1,518,765	\$3,266,283	\$12,539,103	\$17,337,798
FY-03 Total = \$15,457,030	\$18,510	\$1,357,623	\$2,779,878	\$11,301,019	\$15,457,030
FY-02 Total = \$13,521,219	\$111,750	\$1,471,869	\$2,538,723	\$9,398,877	\$13,521,219
FY-01 Total = \$12,634,894	\$173,182	\$1,467,521	\$2,454,997	\$8,539,194	\$12,634,894

**Goal 5:** **To increase the number of positive discharges.** There were 6 more runaways this year than last year. As we bring in older teens, despite our counsel against these plans, more are choosing to run away as a means to exit the system and care.

One severely medically fragile child died. Eight, 5 fewer than last year, went to residential treatment facilities for a higher level of care. Six more children this year than last were sent by Children's Choice to other agencies, primarily for sibling reunification, and 31 teens, 5 more than last year, successfully achieved emancipation. There were 115 reunifications, 52 permanent legal custodianships and 131 adoptions meaning that a total of 298 children achieved permanency!

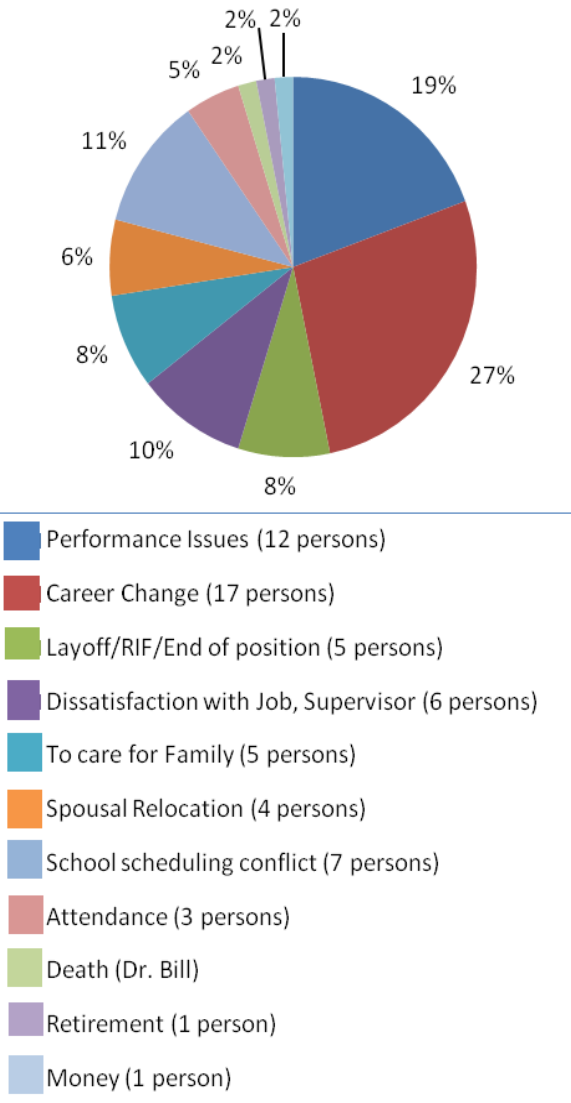




**Goal 6:**      **To increase staff retention rate.** We have decreased staff turnover from 50% in FY 2010 to 37% in FY 2011, a 26% reduction.

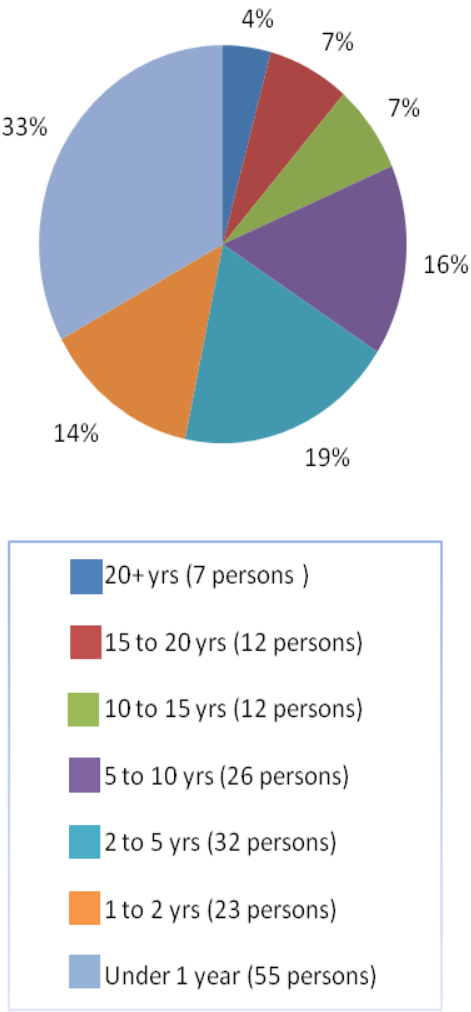
**Terminations of Staff**

**Fiscal Year 2011**  
**37% Turnover rate**



**Length of Employee Service in Years**

**Total Number of Employees: 167**



## **THE VOICE OF CHOICE: RESOURCE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP**

The Voice of Choice (VOC) is a Resource Parent support group representing all the families of Children's Choice. We have a group that consists of representatives and alternates from each Children's Choice office who meet quarterly at the main office in Bellmawr, New Jersey. Our president is a voting member on the agency's Board of Directors. At our meetings we discuss the good and problematic issues going on in each office and neighborhood with Children's Choice President Dr. Carolyn Eberwein, and Web Eberwein, the Director of Operations. We also discuss fund raising efforts, and make plans for upcoming events.

Last Fall we had several offices donate themed baskets for a silent auction to help raise funds for the VOC. We also fund the Santa's Workshop for each office every November so that every child has the opportunity to choose Christmas gifts for their birth and resource families. This event is very important to the children. It helps to boost their self-esteem and bring them and their families much joy. Most offices also have a special craft for the children to make while waiting for their turn to shop. VOC representatives also help the Program Coordinators and office staff host their office Christmas parties. They may pick up donated toys, wrap gifts, decorate, and prepare food for these well-attended and loved events. They step in ready to help wherever needed.

VOC funds are also used for our scholarship program which any child, (birth, foster or adopted) can apply for and receive. We give these scholarships out two times per year. Each scholarship is for \$500.00. This past year we have been able to give a total of 6 scholarships. We have been working on our very first VOC cookbook and hope to have it available soon for purchase. The monies from the cookbook will go to help fund all the VOC projects for the coming year.

The VOC has produced Accused, a DVD that helps educate families on the abuse allegation process. Representatives are available for support

to families who may be going through an allegation. Every office has access to this DVD to share with a family in the unfortunate event of an abuse allegation. We are working on updating this DVD to include words from families who have been through this process. They will talk about what it feels like to have an allegation, what the process is really like, how it affected their family, advice on how to cope during that trying time. This DVD has been a huge resource for families in crisis.

We have had the opportunity each year to send several representatives to the National Foster Parent Association and to State Resource Family Conferences where a wealth of beneficial trainings are offered.

We have had a very productive year. As always we invite you to attend one of our quarterly meetings, come see for yourself what we are all about!

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





## COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

525 Pennsylvania children were cared for this year by 348 resource families.



Seventy-seven permanent legal custodianships were awarded by Pennsylvania courts.



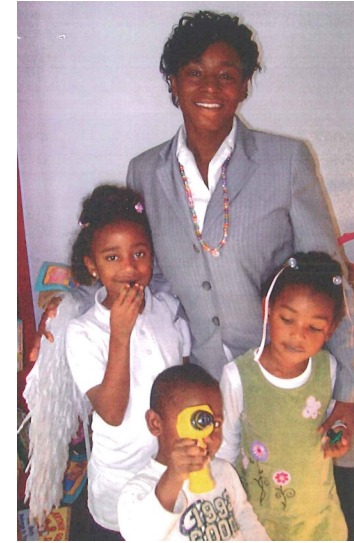
Sibling groups totaling 326 children were placed together.



One hundred and two Pennsylvania adoptions were finalized.



Sixty-nine Pennsylvania children were reunified with their parents.



Twenty-five mothers and their babies were kept together in foster families.





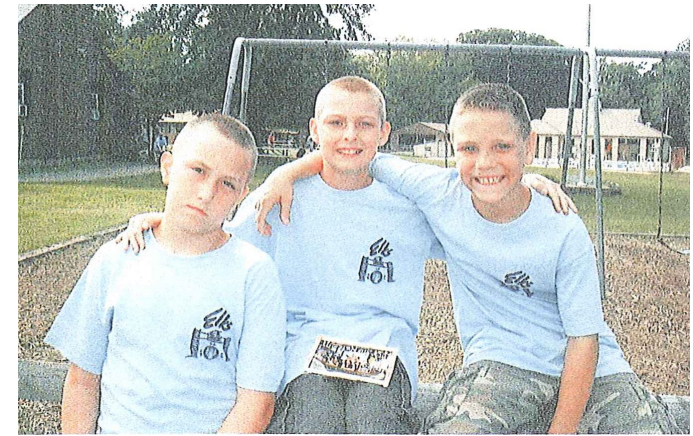
## STATE OF DELAWARE



Fifteen reunifications were achieved.



One hundred and twenty-seven children were cared for by 67 Delaware resource parents.



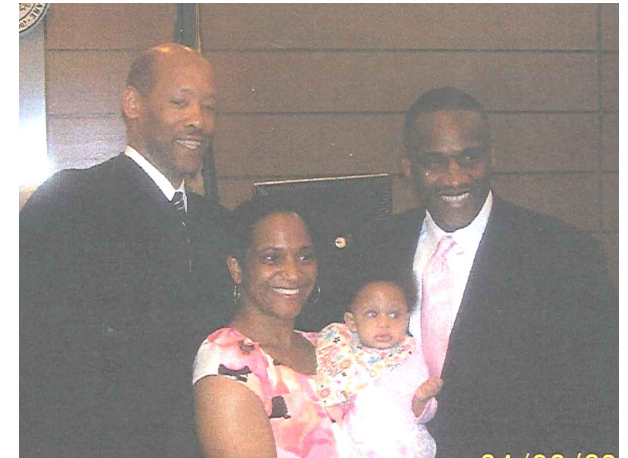
Thirty-five siblings were placed together this year, part of Children's Choice's emphasis on sustaining family ties.



Three emancipations were effected.



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



Twenty-four adoptions were finalized this year in Delaware.



## STATE OF MARYLAND



Seven emancipations occurred.



Sixteen reunifications were achieved!



One hundred and forty three children were cared for by 90 Maryland resource parents.



Our Mid Shore and Lower Shore respite programs provided 1,768 nights of respite and prevented entry into care for 73 children from 61 families.



Twelve siblings were placed together with us this year.



## WASHINGTON, D.C.



Fifteen sibling groups were served.

Thirty-three resource parents served  
50 children this year.



Six reunifications  
were joined.



A contract for Mother/baby  
placements enabled mothers and their  
children to remain together.



Three adoptions were finalized!



## SPECIAL EVENTS

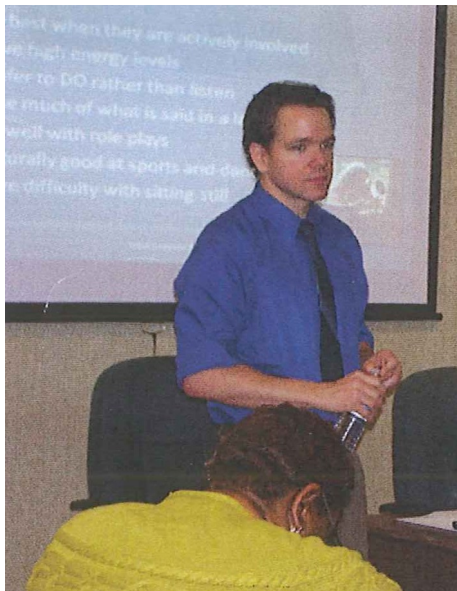
Private monies raised through events such as our “Country Auction” supplement contracted public funding.



An auctioneer-in-training accepts bids on some of the unusual items placed for bid.



Bring Your Child to Work Day allows children of staff members to come to work and see what their parents do all day (but staff do not get face-painting as an employee benefit).



Adams Eberwein, Director of Training coordinates, designs and presents 6,520 hours of in-service training for Children’s Choice staff so that each staff member can achieve 40 hours per year specific to the children for whom we care.



*Rev. Bernard Keels, Board Member, speaks at Founder’s Day.*



*Ken White, Maintenance Department, receives his Employee Service Award for 5 years of service from Dr. Carolyn A. Eberwein, Agency President.*



## SPECIAL EVENTS (CONTINUED)

### SUMMER PICNICS



### CHRISTMAS

Santa comes to each Children's Choice office.



Hundreds of gifts are generously donated by individuals and businesses using the "Angel Trees" placed by Children's Choice recruiters.

The gifts are distributed at Christmas parties sponsored by local churches and corporations.



*Web Eberwein, Chief Operating Officer, leads the saying of grace before a Christmas party.*





WE LOVE TO SEE THE CHILDREN AT PLAY









### **BRANCH OFFICES**

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

Philadelphia, PA

610-521-6270

1-800-LA-CHILD



### **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
South Philadelphia	(215) 551-6501
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)**

### **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 up coming year as a continuing opportunity to reach out to the world, 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.

I truly hope you will accept this invitation to join our efforts to better our world by reaching out to a child in need. Your gift of \$100 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 ☐ will be of great assistance. Thank you and may God bless you.

Sincerely,

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

*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 Children and Families Services Agency of Washington, D.C.*