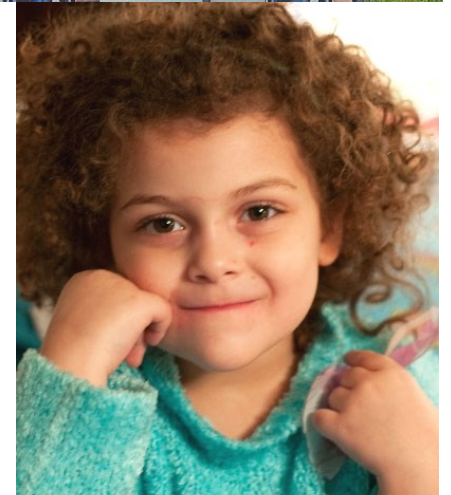
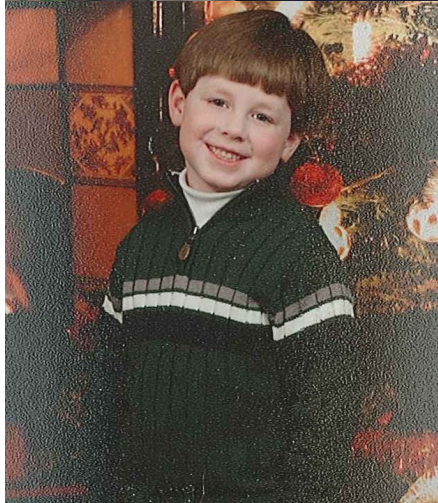




# THE CHILDREN'S CHOICE

Specialized Foster Care, Kinship, & Adoption Services



*"Teach them the Way"*

**2008 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 Police Officer  
City of Philadelphia*



**Dr. Sheila Thompson**  
**Secretary of the Board**

*Chief Executive Officer  
Precision Research &  
Evaluation, LLC*



**Mrs. Regina Fike**  
**Board Member**

*President  
Voice of Choice*



**Rev. Bernard Keels**  
**Board Member**

*Executive Director  
Methodist Action Program*



**Dr. Carolyn A. Eberwein**  
**Board Member**

*Chief Executive Officer  
Children's Choice*



**Dr. William J. Eberwein, Sr.**  
**Board Member**

*President  
Children's Choice*



**Mrs. Christine Keels**  
**Board Member**

*Executive Director  
Department of Justice for  
the District of Columbia*

## STEWARDSHIP REPORT

In every family, there is a storyteller. I don't mean the little child who is telling a tale to get out from under discipline for breaking his mother's favorite picture frame; I mean the person who is the repository for all the family anecdotes, mementoes, and memorabilia. The important things such as the kindergartener's drawings that once hung on the family refrigerator, the school photos over a succession of years, and the crumpled corsage from a long time ago dance. The one who is always called upon at family holiday celebrations to regale the group with tales of everyone's youthful misbehaviors or malapropisms, the one who can turn steely eyes misty with accounts of nearly forgotten tendernesses or bravery. In these stories our personal histories are immortalized and we form a part of our sense of self in the hearing and repetition of them. We learn from the mistakes of others, are warned about dangers another faced without having to undergo that danger ourselves, and we are taught the values and traditions of our recent and long past ancestors.

Not only are storytellers enjoyed by individual families. Cultures have national anthems, poets laureate, symbols that explain the past in order to ease dealing with the present and future. The Navajo and other First Nation tribes tell stories in woven blankets, baskets and in their native dress. The Inuit use totem poles, carved with symbols that tell stories of conquests, successful hunts, and strategic liaisons. Amish culture is renown for the symbolism inherent in the quilts their families create and for the storytelling that takes place at the quilting bee. African and Chinese masks are carved to symbolize emotions and details of their respective cultures. The Lord Jesus used parables to communicate His messages of hope and thousands of stained glass windows in churches throughout the world bear testimony to Biblical events. In Ireland, Celtic crosses are carved with Biblical events so the stories can be "read" by all who see them.

Too often, children in our care do not have access to their family's history, perhaps because those who know it are unwilling or unable emotionally to share it, or the storyteller may have passed on without a successor, or the family may have relocated often and the precious artifacts which prompt the tales have been lost. Without a history, how does one grow fully? How does one pass on the past unless one owns a bit of it?

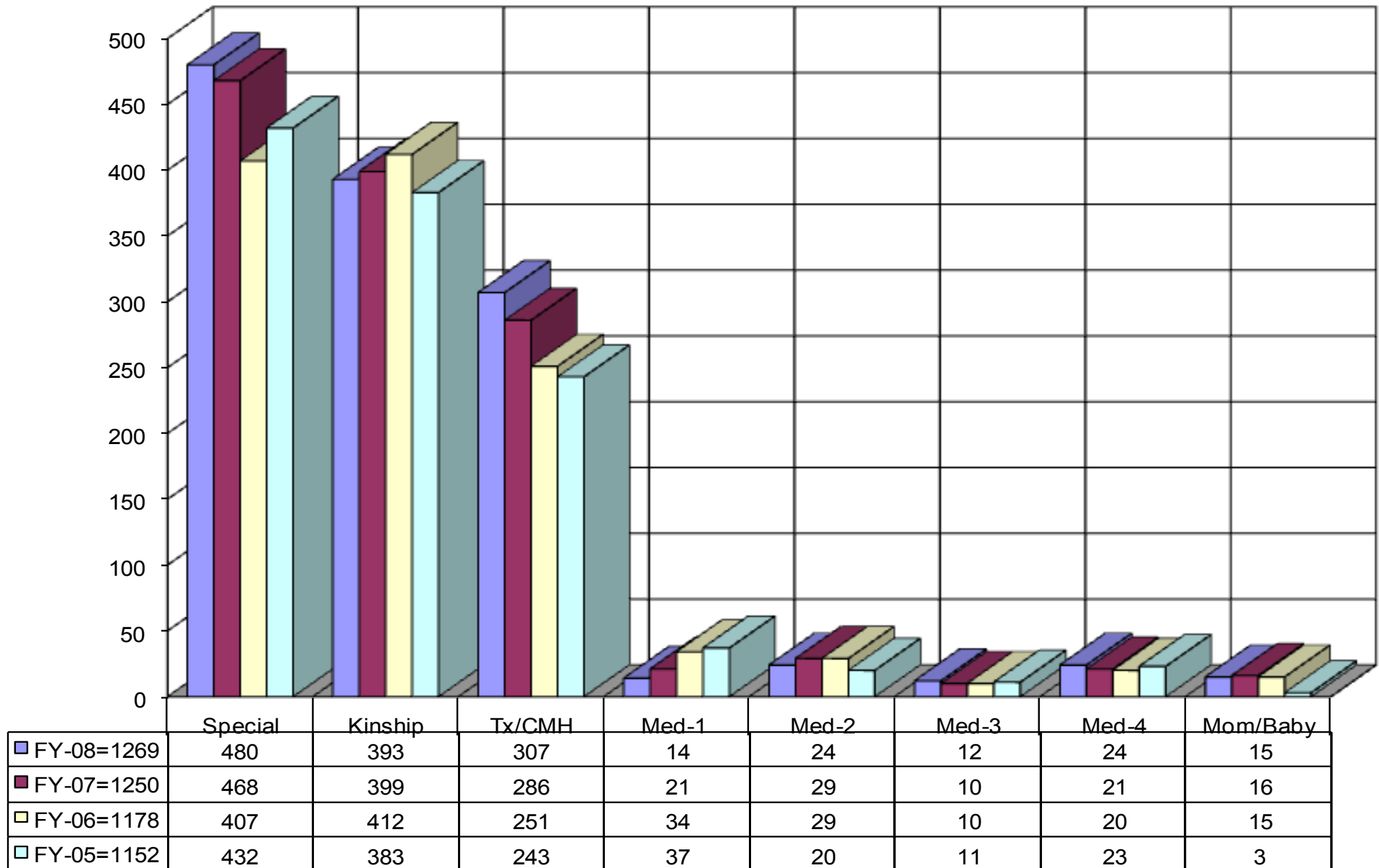
One of the many tasks of kinship and foster families is to provide the stories for children who are not able to live with their parents, either temporarily or permanently. We use devices such as Life Books, repositories of photos, report cards and school papers; these are created with the child and follow the child home, whether that be with birth parents, adoptive families or with kin. We also make ceremonies of birthdays, holidays, school progress, sports achievement, any reasons we can find to make a positive memory, to create or add to a child's story. We try to keep the child connected to his family so the story which they began together can resume, even if it has to be structured differently than was originally planned.

This report is one way Children's Choice tells its story. There are facts and figures, but there are also photos of children and families, all components of the story we want to tell. Please read our tale for this year and pray for our continued ability to enhance the stories of all those for whom God has given us responsibility.



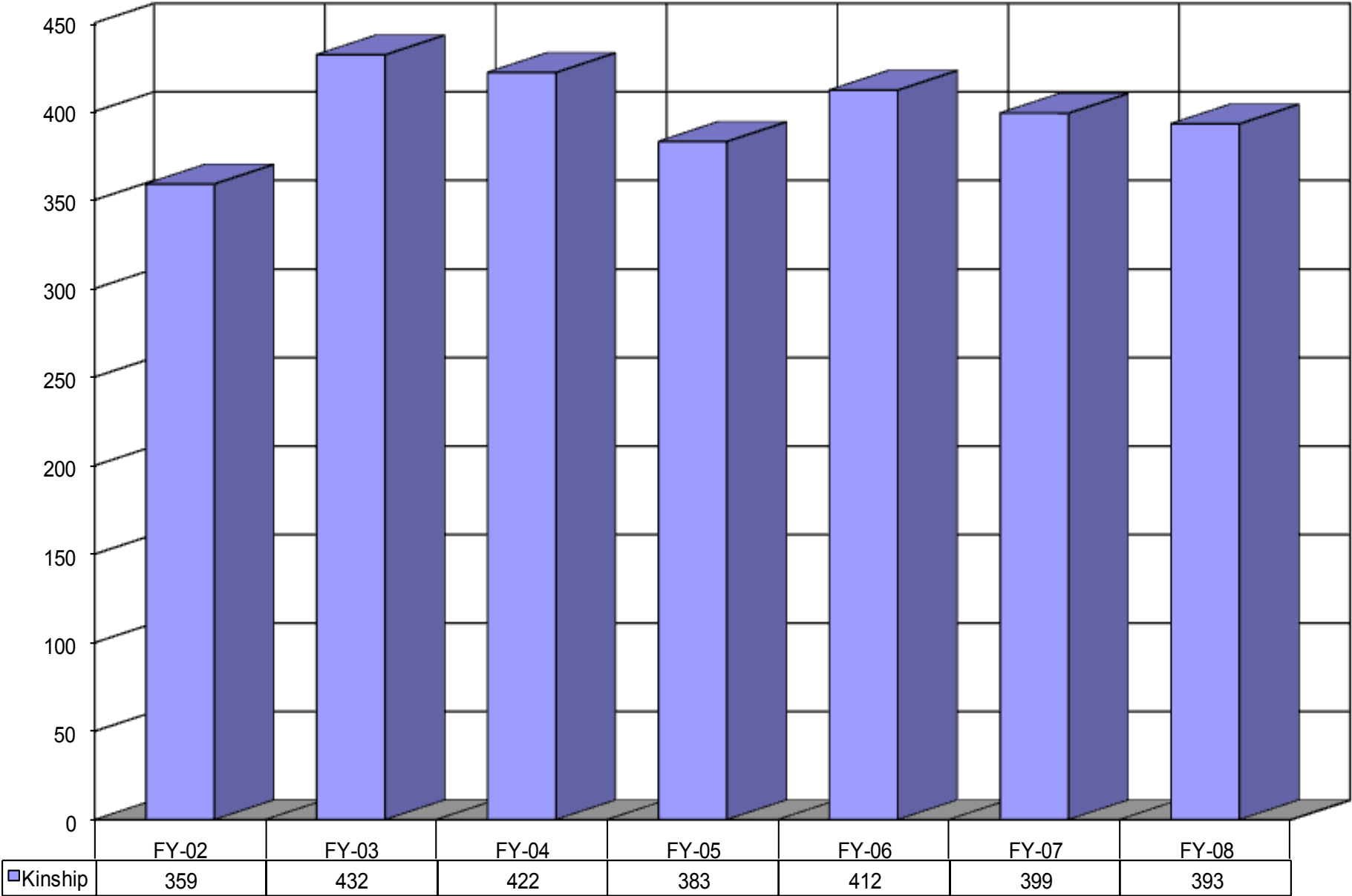
**Dr. William J. Eberwein, Sr., President**  
**Dr. Carolyn A. Eberwein, Chief Executive Officer**  
*Founders of Children's Choice*

**Goal 1:**      **To increase the total number of children served:** We served 1,269 children this year, 19 more than last year. Twelve of these children were in the specialized category, there were 10% more in the most severely medically needy group and 21 (7.5%) more children with mental health/treatment needs.

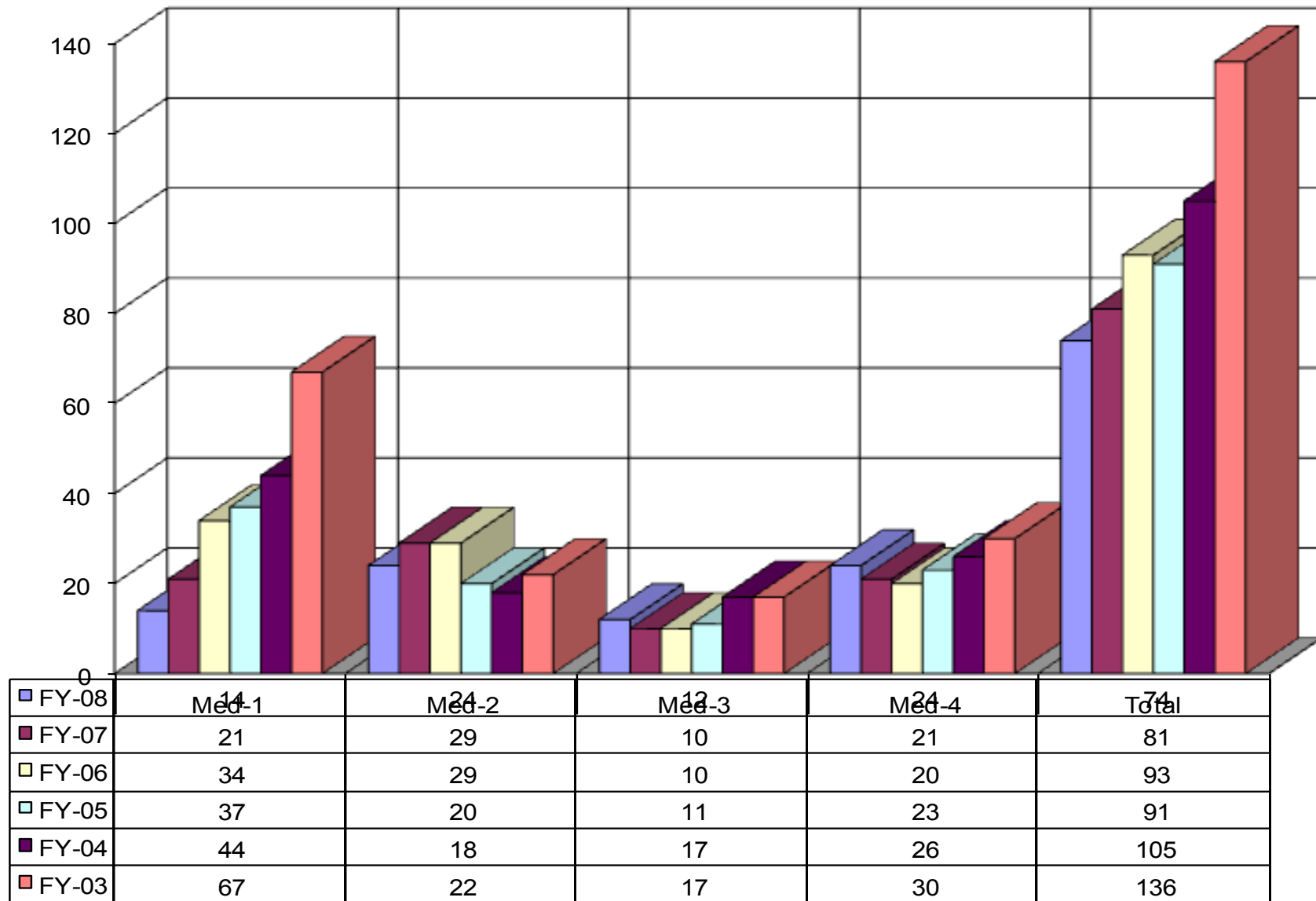




**Goal 2:**      **To expand kinship services:** We served a total of 393 children in kinship families. Fifty-three of these children, cared for by kin, were discharged to permanent legal custodianship and 19 others were adopted by the relatives who had cared for them.

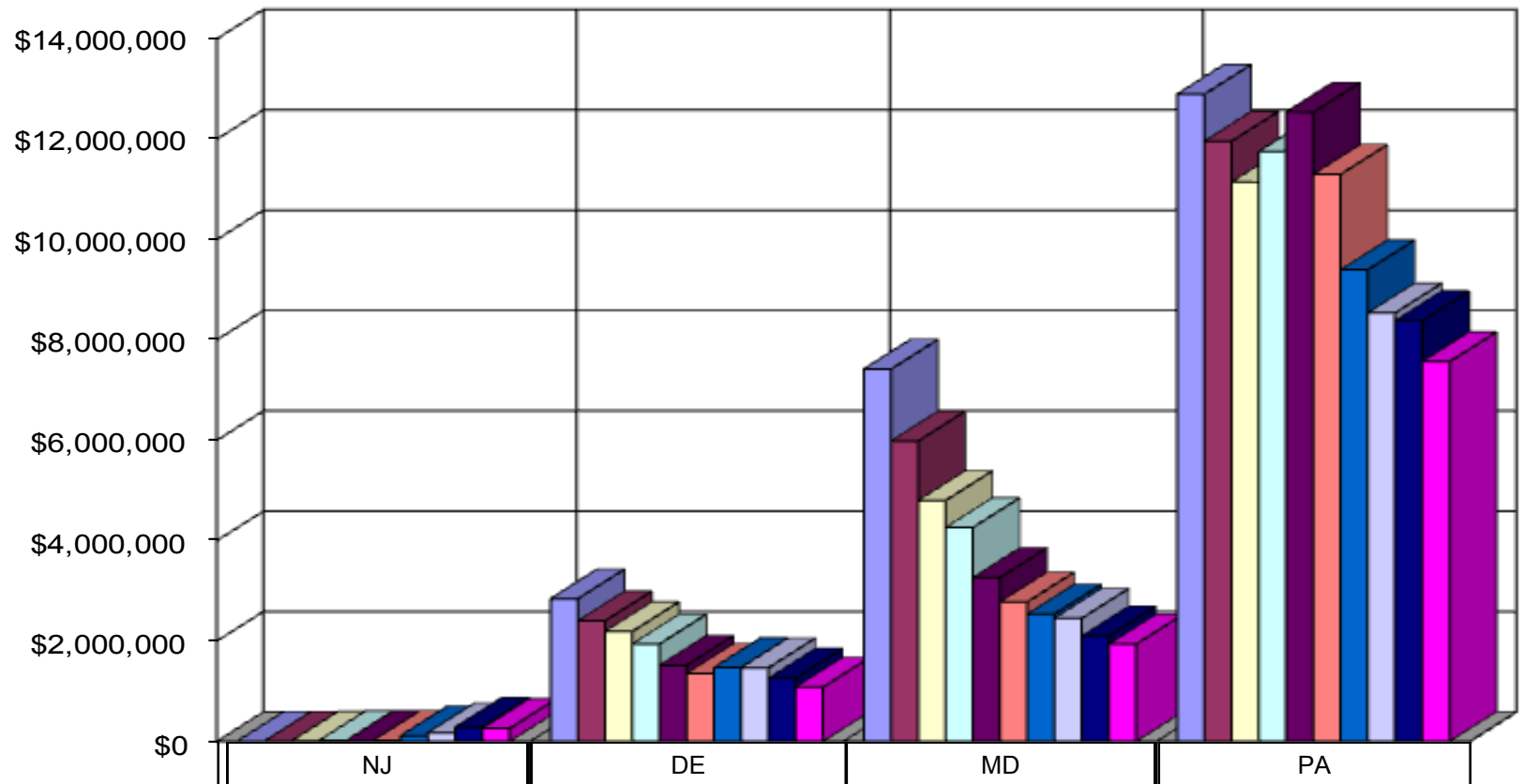


**Goal 3:** **To increase our services to medically fragile children:** Seven children “graduated” out of the least medically needy category as they no longer needed intensive medical care. Five more children were accepted needing more intensive services in the range of medical needs. These children’s diagnoses are HIV Positive, Neurological Delays, Developmental Delays, Spinal Bifida, Shaken Baby Syndrome, Kidney Failure, Asphyxia, Blood Poisoning, Blindness, Tracheotomies, Seizures, and “Prune Belly” Syndrome.



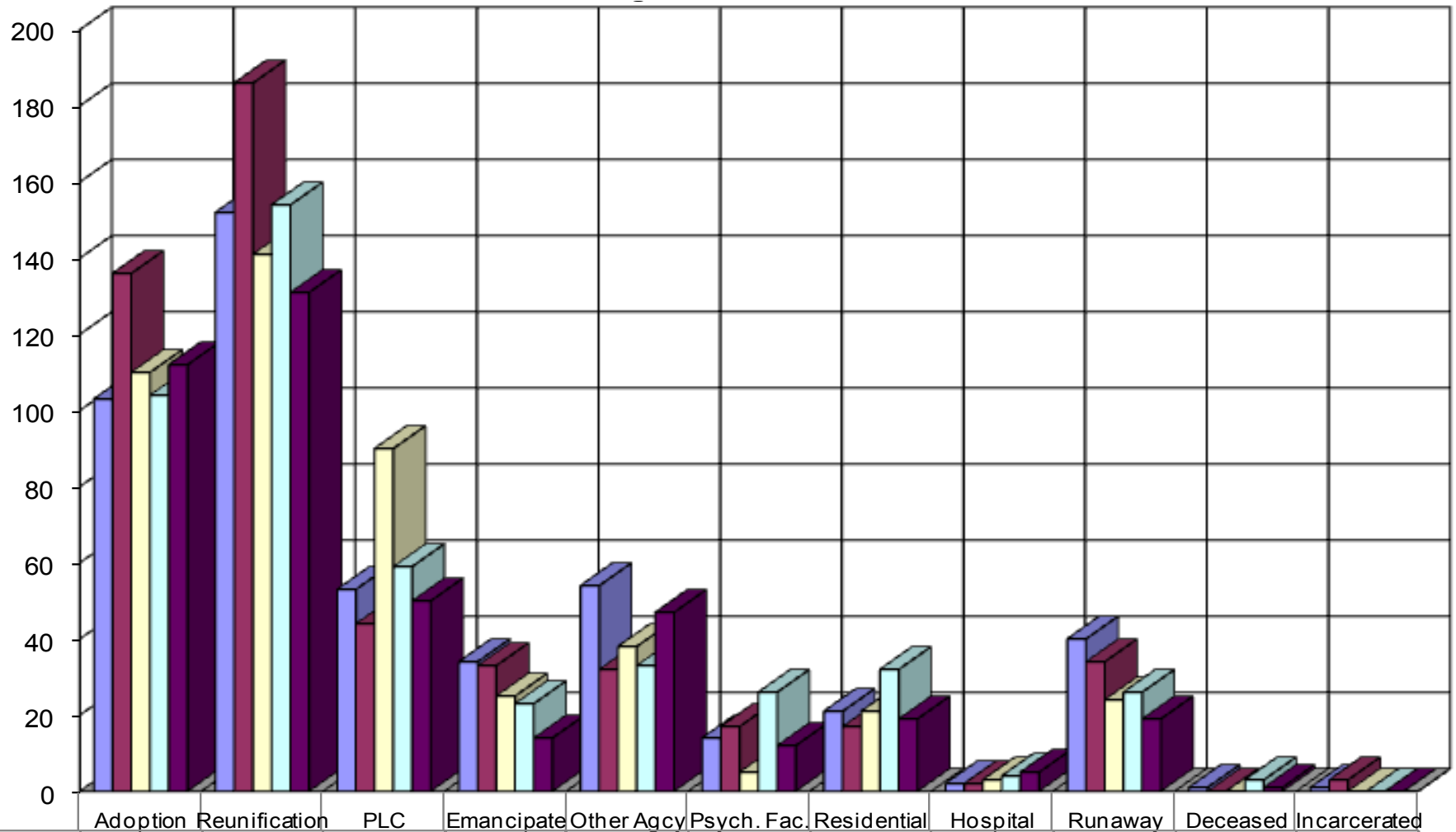


**Goal 4:**      **To increase agency revenues:** Our revenues have increased through contracts and an increased number of higher acuity placements.



	NJ	DE	MD	PA
FY-08 Total = \$23,161,658	\$2,686	\$2,842,793	\$7,419,302	\$12,896,877
FY-07 Total = \$20,354,761	\$3,189	\$2,402,532	\$5,987,392	\$11,961,648
FY-06 Total = \$18,144,224	\$7,317	\$2,190,529	\$4,800,864	\$11,145,514
FY-05 Total = \$17,973,734	\$15,289	\$1,942,637	\$4,262,707	\$11,753,101
FY-04 Total = \$17,337,798	\$13,647	\$1,518,765	\$3,266,283	\$12,539,103
FY-03 Total = \$15,457,030	\$18,510	\$1,357,623	\$2,779,878	\$11,301,019
FY-02 Total = \$13,521,219	\$111,750	\$1,471,869	\$2,538,723	\$9,398,877
FY-01 Total = \$12,634,894	\$173,182	\$1,467,521	\$2,454,997	\$8,539,194
FY-00 Total = \$12,031,151	\$280,824	\$1,261,946	\$2,102,883	\$8,385,498
FY-99 Total = \$10,848,569	\$258,756	\$1,082,897	\$1,939,676	\$7,567,240

**Goal 5:** **To increase the number of positive discharges:** We discharged 28 less children this year. Of the 475 discharged, Children's Choice effected 335 positive discharges (adoption, reunification, PLC and emancipation) this year. Thirty-seven children were discharged to more restrictive settings (psychiatric or residential facilities) and there were 40 runaways. Sixty-one children were discharged to other agencies, often to effect sibling reunification; one teen was incarcerated for an offense allegedly committed prior to his referral to Children's Choice; and one medically fragile child died.

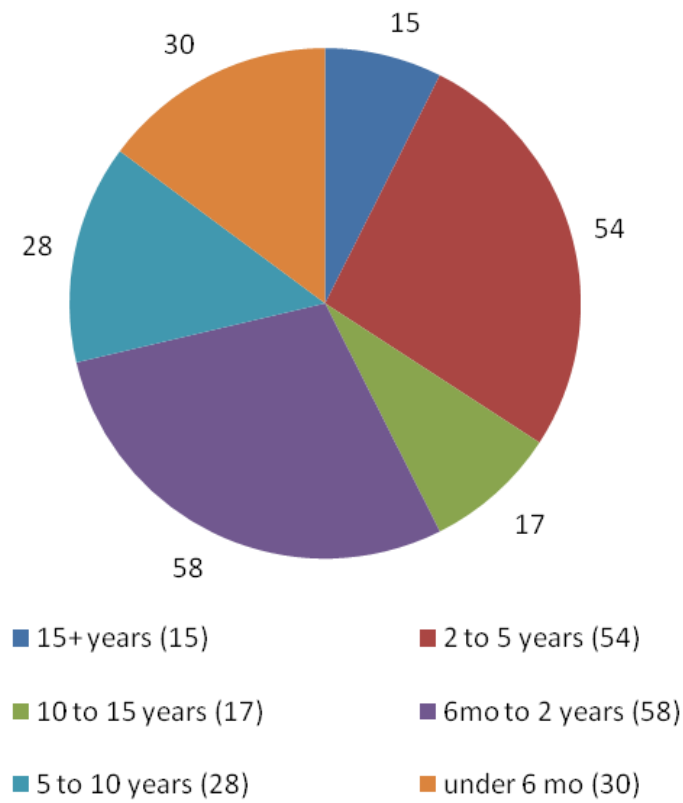


	Adoption	Reunification	PLC	Emancipate	Other Agcy	Psych. Fac.	Residential	Hospital	Runaway	Deceased	Incarcerated
FY-08 Total = 475	103	152	53	34	54	14	21	2	40	1	1
FY-07 Total = 504	136	186	44	33	32	17	17	2	34	0	3
FY-06 Total = 457	110	141	90	25	38	5	21	3	24	0	0
FY-05 Total = 464	104	154	59	23	33	26	32	4	26	3	0
FY-04 Total = 410	112	131	50	14	47	12	19	5	19	1	0

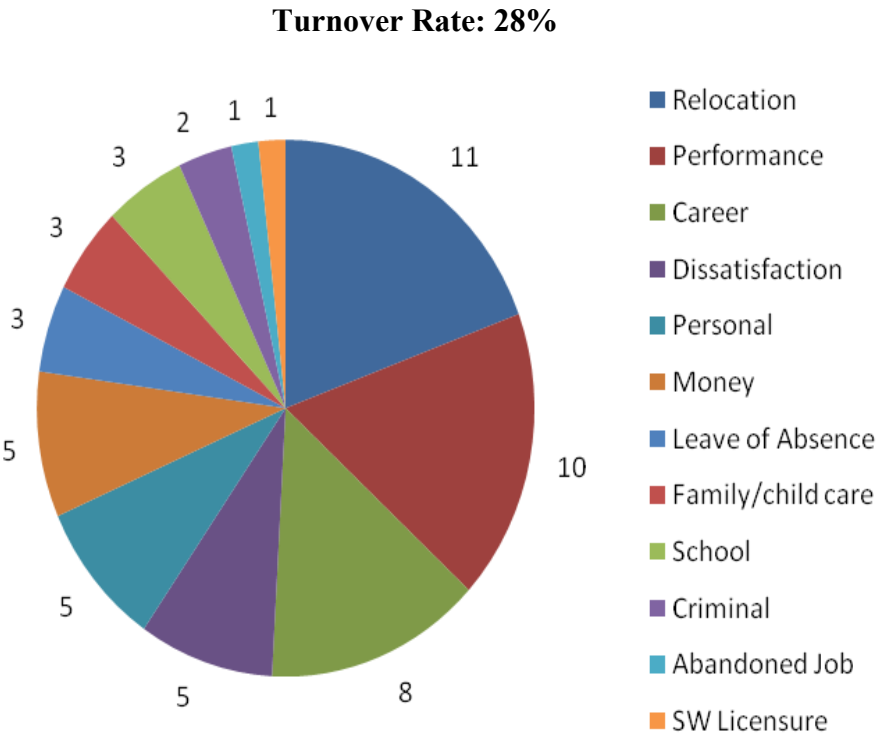


**Goal 6:      To increase staff retention rate.**

**Number of Employees by Years of Service**  
**Total Number of Employees: 202**



**Number of Full Time Employees Separated from Children’s Choice**



Does not include layoff and seasonal

## LEADERSHIP

### FOUNDERS

Dr. William J. Eberwein, Founder and President, elucidates agency goals, negotiates contracts and plans new programs to keep Children's Choice abreast of current community needs in all the states in which Children's Choice operates.



Dr. Carolyn A. Eberwein, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, co-chairs the National Committee for Kinship Care of the Child Welfare League of America and that organization's sub-committee for the Development of Kinship Care Standards.

Dr. Carolyn continues to serve on the State Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Families.



### REGIONAL DIRECTORS



**Cynthia Aguilar, Ed.D.**  
*Regional Director  
Pennsylvania & Adoption*



**Leslie Allen, MSW**  
*Regional Director  
Maryland & Pennsylvania*



**Genevie Brown, MSW**  
*Regional Director  
Philadelphia*



**Joseph Corbett, MAI**  
*Director of Real Estate  
Development*



**Lori Corner, SPHR**  
*Director of  
Human Resources*



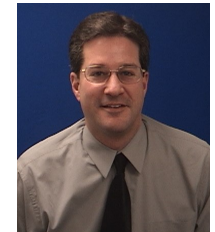
**Web Eberwein, MBA**  
*Deputy Director of  
Administrative Services*



**Cindy Knapp, MA**  
*Regional Director  
Delaware &  
Pennsylvania*



**Vickie Melvin, MSW**  
*Regional Director  
Philadelphia*



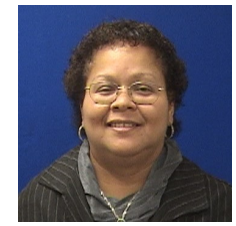
**Chris O'Donnell, MS**  
*Director of  
Management  
Information Services*



**Margaret Philips, Esq.**  
*Corporate Attorney*



**Cindy Ruby, MSW**  
*Regional Director  
Maryland*



**Debbie Street, MSW**  
*Regional Director  
District of Columbia*



## COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA



*The Honorable Kevin Dougherty, President Judge, Philadelphia Family Court and Anne Marie Ambrose, Philadelphia Department of Human Services Commissioner, preside over the adoption of Dupree by Korto Cassell and her family.  
(Left to Right: Row One-Danielle Cassell, Dupree, Daniel Cassell  
Row Two-Korto Cassell, Judge Dougherty, Commissioner Ambrose)*

53 permanent legal custodianships were awarded by Pennsylvania courts.



Sibling groups totaling 191 children were placed together.

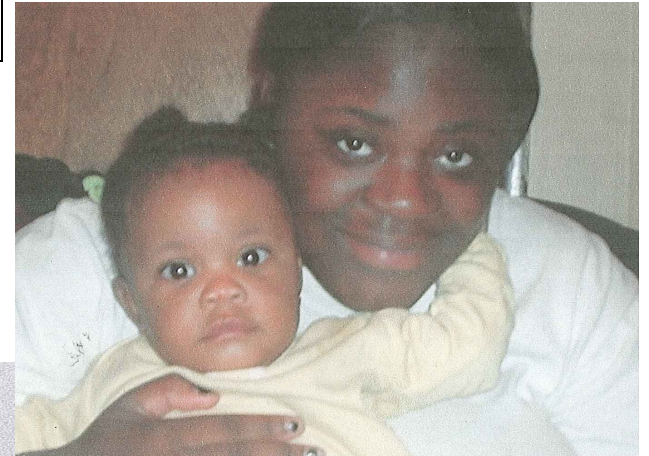
847 Pennsylvania children were cared for this year by 439 resource families.

61 Pennsylvania adoptions were finalized.



*Philadelphia Family Court Master Christine Adair finalizing the adoptions of Corey, Dennis and Damir by Iris Leggett.*

94 Pennsylvania children were reunified with their parents.



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





## PENNSYLVANIA (CONTINUED)



*Philadelphia Family Court Master Christine Adair finalized the adoption of Dhafir.*



Birth family visits keep family ties strong.



Seventy-four medically fragile children received care through Children's Choice this year.



All adoptions are special events celebrated by the new family unit and with a gift from Children's Choice.





## STATE OF DELAWARE

Placement prevention is aided through our Parent Aide program.



Forty-one reunifications were achieved.



One hundred and ninety-six children were cared for by 81 resource parents.



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



Graduating teens receive the "Bridge Builder" award for community service.



*The Rita's Water Ice staff in Dover served Children's Choice staff, resource parents and children free water ice for a "Christmas in July" celebration.*



Twenty-nine adoptions were finalized this year in Delaware.

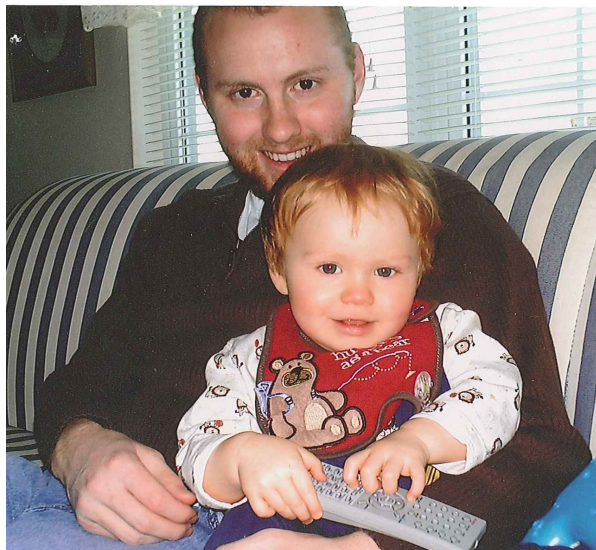
Four emancipations were effected.



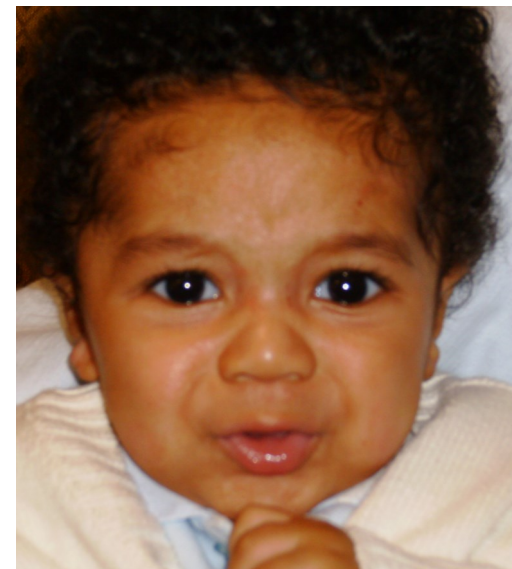
## STATE OF MARYLAND



The Baltimore office sponsored a car wash fundraiser for a trip to the zoo.



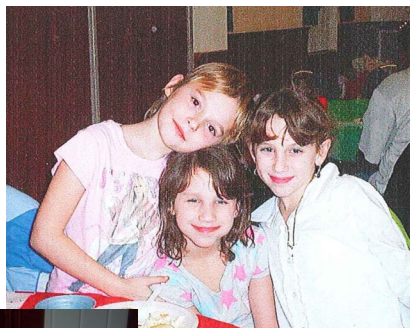
Seventeen reunifications were achieved!



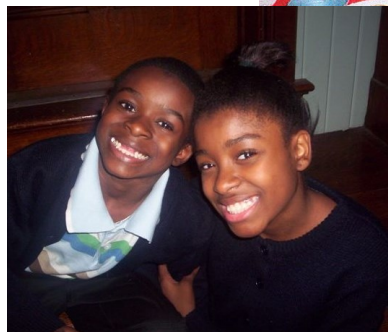
Our mid shore and lower shore respite programs provided 1,702 nights of respite and prevented entry into care for 63 children from 51 families.



Six emancipations occurred.



Twenty-two siblings were placed with us this year.



Six adoptions were finalized this year in Maryland.



## WASHINGTON, D.C.

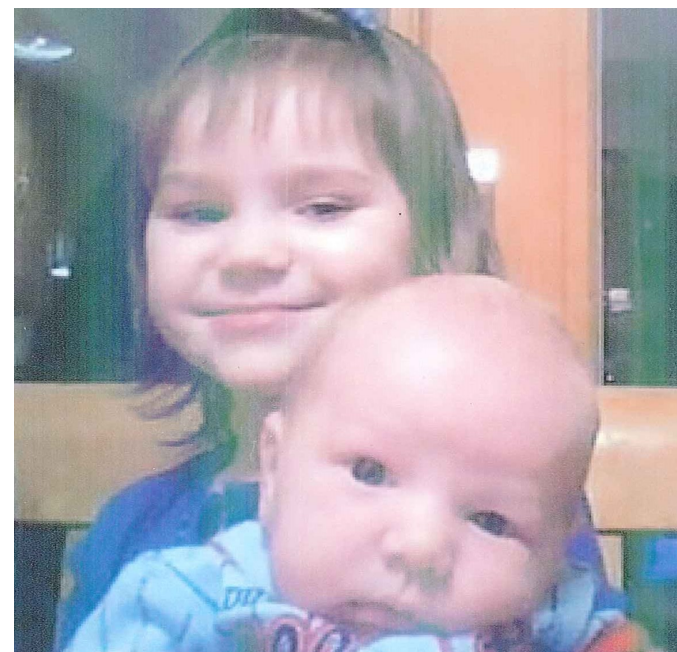
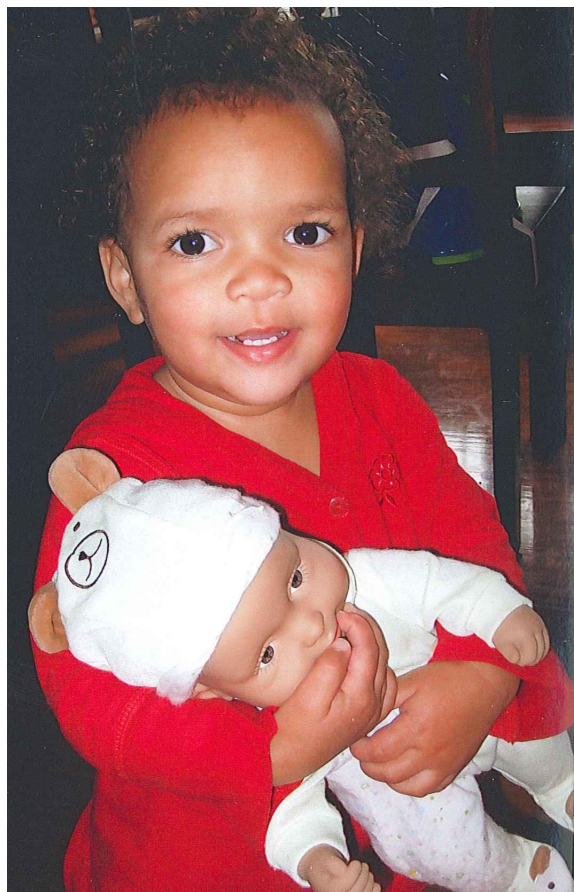
Thirty-one resource parents served 66 children this year.



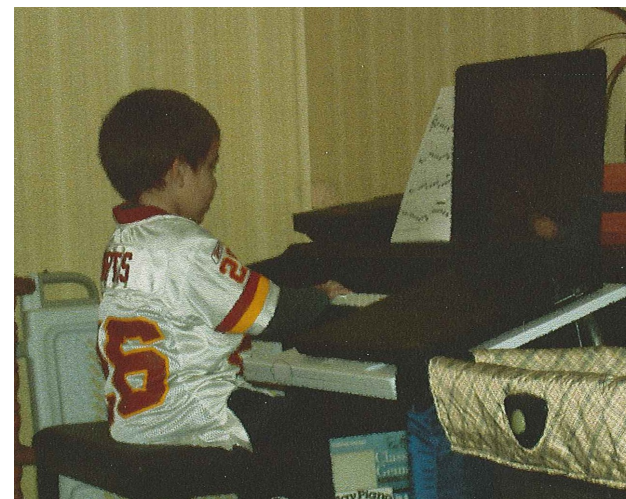
Sixteen sibling groups ranging from 2 to 7 children were served.



Mother/baby placements enabled young mothers and their children to remain together.



Seven reunifications were joined.



One adoption was finalized!



## SPECIAL EVENTS

### BRING YOUR CHILD TO WORK DAY



*Not all of us were happy to come to work today!*



Bring Your Child to Work Day Helpers prepare "giveaways" for our adoption recruitment display.



### FOUNDER'S DAY



*Jillian Holdren and JoAnn Goldstein greet Founder's Day participants.*



*Staff from all Children's Choice offices join the celebration.*



*Dr. Bill gives his annual "State of Children's Choice" address at our April Founder's Day celebration.*



*Tracey Freeman, Recruitment Supervisor, presents a corsage and gift basket to Dr. Bill and Dr. Carolyn as Founder's Day begins.*



## SPECIAL EVENTS (CONTINUED)

### CHRISTMAS



*Mr. Dennis Ketterer, Chief Meteorologist at WBOC television station presents a \$3,000 donation to Georgetown, Delaware Children's Choice Program Coordinator, LaTannia Neal.*



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 corporations.



HO!  
HO!  
HO!





## SPECIAL EVENTS (CONTINUED)

### AT THE CIRCUS



### PREVENTION PROGRAM GRADUATES



### ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS DAY



On Administrative Professionals Day, some of our staff created and painted ceramics. Others enjoyed lunch with their supervisors at local restaurants.





## **THE VOICE OF CHOICE: RESOURCE PARENTS' SUPPORT GROUP**

The Voice of Choice is the dynamic and fast growing Resource Parent's Support Group representing all the families of The Children's Choice. This group evolved from a Parent's Advisory Board that was started at the invitation of Drs. Bill and Carolyn Eberwein in 1997, with a mandate to give Resource Parents a voice at the corporate level. All currently licensed Children's Choice parents are members of the VOC. Today we are excited to be serving more than 700 families in PA, MD, DE, NJ, and DC.

The VOC is comprised of elected representatives and alternates who meet bi-monthly at the corporate office. Our meetings are open to all Resource Parents and staff. Dr. Bill and Dr. Carolyn regularly attend these, and act in an advisory capacity. The VOC membership is a cross section of Resource Parents and includes kinship, foster and adoptive families from all the states in which Children's Choice is located. This diversity has proved to be a valuable asset as we share our common experiences and learn from each others challenges. One of the most important functions at a VOC meeting is the Representatives Forum, in which representatives can exchange questions, concerns and ideas.

The VOC is funded entirely by the voluntary donations of resource families and a matching grant from the Agency. Following are just a few of the many ongoing programs and activities of the VOC:

**THE VOC Scholarships:** Scholarships are available to ANY child of a Resource family for ANY post high school education. Scholarship applications are available through your VOC Representative and are awarded in the Spring and Fall.

**Special Fund Endowments:** The VOC regularly earmarks money for the "Special Funds" needs in each office. These funds help to defray expenses for exceptional needs of children in care that are not covered in the regular stipend (prescription glasses, prom etc).

**Santa's Workshop:** The VOC funds Santa's Workshops for each office so that children can enjoy purchasing small gifts for their families.

**Board of Directors:** The sitting VOC President is appointed a seat on the Agency's Board of Directors as a voting member.

**Abuse Allegations Training:** The VOC has produced a video to help educate families about the process of abuse allegations. The VOC representatives are available as a support resource for families who may be going through this difficult experience.

**Conference Attendance:** The VOC actively attends State, National and International Conferences to network and exchange ideas with our peers. Members have presented at conferences all over the US and Internationally.



*Children's Choice Resource Parents at the  
National Foster Parent Association Meeting.*

*Left to Right: Roger and Shelly Wise, Lewisburg, PA;  
Beverly Robinson, Salisbury, MD; Karen Webb, Lewisburg, PA;  
Dolores Blegen, Washington, DC; Laverne Stewart, Salisbury, MD;  
and Lori Walters, Lewisburg, PA.*



**NEW EMPLOYEE TRAINING, RESOURCE PARENT TRAINING, BIRTH PARENT TRAINING...We believe in the importance of training!**



Seventy-eight new employees participated in 4,581 hours of training in agency policy, child abuse reporting, casework and birth parent support.



*Regional Director, Vicki Melvin teaches the New Employees.*

600 resource parents participated in 21,600 hours of training by Children's Choice staff and other resource parents.



*Lori Corner, Human Resource Director teaches new employees how to sustain their employability.*



*Dr. Cynthia Aguilar explains the steps for permanency to adoption staff and Program Coordinators.*



*Children's Choice staff at training presented by Audra Stock-Morris, Children's Choice's certified Play Therapist.*



*Left to Right: Debbie Street, Children's Choice Regional Director and Christine Keels, Children's Choice Board of Directors member.*

Our Washington, DC office has worked with the DC Department of Adult Probation and McKendree-Simms-Brookland Church to provide meals and parenting classes for birth parents who are on probation.

**MANAGEMENT MEETINGS**



*Dr. Carolyn leads Monday Management meetings bi-weekly.*



*Pulcheria Ricks-Poole, our Training Department Coordinator, presents child abuse awareness to prospective resource parents.*



**THIS IS WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO!**









### **BRANCH OFFICES**

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

Philadelphia, PA 610-521-6270

1-800-LA-CHILD



Specialized Foster Care, Kinship, & Adoption Services

### **PENNSYLVANIA OFFICES**

Delaware County	(610) 872-6200
Germantown	(215) 843-2222
Lewisburg	(570) 522-1030
Mt. Airy	(215) 329-6191
Northeast	(215) 333-3050
Oak Lane	(215) 329-6191
Overbrook Park	(215) 871-7836
Oxford Avenue	(215) 831-9164
Penn Treaty	(215) 634-8940
South Philadelphia	(215) 551-6501
Treatment Foster Care	(215) 551-3401
Treatment Foster Care #2	(215) 271-6404
West Philadelphia	(215) 222-1930

### **DELAWARE OFFICES**

Dover	(302) 678-0404
Georgetown	(302) 856-0942
Newark	(302) 731-9512

### **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE**

Washington	(202) 635-6250
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### **MARYLAND OFFICES**

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

### **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,

Reverend William J. Eberwein, Sr.  
President

*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.*