

FALL  
2015

# bridge

Bridging the gap for children and families in need

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## Meet Alex

### A Family Solutions for Kids Success Story

When PCHAS Family Solutions for Kids (FSK) therapist Judy Bauer first met 8-year-old Alex, she found him to be, endearing, humble, confident and honest. She couldn't believe that he been referred to FSK, a unique program to help families find better, healthier ways to interact and work through problems. (FSK works with families in their homes to build upon their strengths and teach them new skills that help them stay together and thrive.) Judy asked herself, "Is this really the child they are having trouble with?" But sure enough, this was the right kid, the child who had recently been expelled from school for kicking a classmate.

How did such a sweet child end up kicking a student and getting expelled? Alex is hypersensitive and has an explosive temper just like his father's. Never a good combination. And there's a lot of stress at home. For one thing, on Alex's eighth birthday, his dad was arrested, for the third time, for driving while intoxicated.

Over time, with thoughtful guidance from Judy, Alex was able to understand himself and his emotions and how to control them. His grades have improved (he's a straight A student now) and he's much happier. The school counselors can hardly believe he's the same child. Judy is very proud of him, and cannot wait to see what the world has in store for Alex. She believes he is destined for great things.

by Margaret Barry

Editor's note:

*FSK experts provide intensive, in-home help for 12 weeks. Therapists respond to each family's unique situation with the specialized skills they have in their toolbox. Each family receives individualized assistance, not cookie cutter solutions. The program is free and available to any St. Louis County family with children ages four to 19. For more information, visit [missouri.pchas.org/in-home-family-therapy-missouri](http://missouri.pchas.org/in-home-family-therapy-missouri).*



Presbyterian Children's  
Homes and Services<sup>SM</sup>  
of Missouri

**MISSION:** Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services provides Christ-centered care and support to children and families in need.



# a message from

Executive Director Robert Giegling



## don't forget!

**Don't forget to visit our website for the latest news and stories!**  
[Missouri.pchas.org/news](http://Missouri.pchas.org/news)



We pride ourselves on our abilities to really think outside the box and **develop strategies that meet the individual needs of the child and/or family.**



I am sometimes in awe of how quickly time passes and how much (over time) our agency's programs and services have evolved. A unique program particularly dear to my heart is Family Solutions for Kids (FSK). I played a key role in developing the program and I'm proud of that. In August, we celebrated its five-year anniversary.

FSK sends experienced therapists into clients' homes to deliver services. The primary goal of FSK is to keep families together, help them work through problems, and eventually shift family dynamics into more peaceful, healthy and cooperative interactions. Thousands of children and families have been transformed by this program. I relish knowing that FSK remains creative and effective in its approach to in-home, family therapy.

Trust is fundamental and essential in order for us to begin to have a meaningful impact on children who have come from intensely challenging circumstances. The professionals in all five PCHAS programs have developed a remarkably keen sense of what it takes to earn the trust of a child who has suffered abuse. They also know how to earn the trust of a family steeped in cycles of chaos, addiction or domestic violence. We take the time to listen, observe and assess. We pride ourselves on our abilities to really think outside the box and develop strategies that meet the individual needs of a child and/or family. Through this process we are able to affect change that heals. In the end, it is trust that allows us to be successful in transforming the broken hearts and minds of children and their families.

We recently celebrated an Open House at our Transitional Living facility in Columbia, and I send my thanks to those who attended and supported the event. I also send my heartfelt thanks to everyone who attended this year's "Hope for The Children" luncheons in Springfield, Columbia and St. Louis! Thank you to the many speakers, donors, sponsors and organizers. You make what we do possible, and our gratitude is beyond measure.

## SEEKING PCHAS



### AMBASSADORS:

We seek one or more individuals who are passionate about our mission to serve as a link between our agency and your church or service organization. PCHAS Ambassadors receive training and support for their special role as PCHAS advocates and liaisons. **Contact your Development Officer to learn more about ways you can help.**

# Community Connections Enhance Lives of Children



## Presbyterian Church of Barrington Lends a Helping Hand in Farmington

A remarkable group of teens and adults from the Presbyterian Church of Barrington in Barrington Hills, Illinois visited our Farmington Residential Treatment Center this summer and worked hard to renovate four cottages, other facilities and the grounds. Each bedroom in every cottage now has new laminate wood flooring. The energetic volunteers spent hours cutting up trees that were downed from storms and had them hauled away. They completed other much-needed repairs as well.

The team spirit and motivation of this group of 34 was infectious. PCHAS staff commented that it was a pure joy to work with the church members. They stayed in a wing of our Farmington Residential Treatment Center for five days. Led by Associate Pastor Reverend Kathryn Kelly, the group worked together like a well-oiled machine.

We were heartened by the reaction of some of the



children when they learned there might not be enough time to replace the flooring in all 12 bedrooms. The group was eager to finish the job so that none of our children in Transitional Living would be without new flooring. Coordinators recruited extra manpower to renovate all the rooms.

We send our heartfelt thanks and blessings to the wonderful people of the Presbyterian Church of Barrington. We have forged new friendships and are thrilled PCHAS was chosen to be the lucky recipient of their mission-based work and expertise. Our cottages look fabulous, the children here love their new rooms, and our grounds are free of downed trees and branches. We also send a special thank you to Associate Pastor Kathryn Kelly, Skip Dolan and John Dawson from Barrington, and to our own Barbara Heider, Angie Brown, Debra Paulus, Caren Mell, Ron Rau and Steve Williams.

To learn about how you or your group can connect with us, contact Debra Paulus at [800.383.8147](tel:800.383.8147) or [Debra.Paulus@pchas.org](mailto:Debra.Paulus@pchas.org).

# Saying Goodbye to Kara McCoy

Two beloved employees, Angie Brown and Kara McCoy, upon their departure, share their passion for PCHAS and what it means to them.

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## Kara McCoy, Therapeutic Mentor

It is with great sadness that I leave Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services. I have been offered a job in another state where I will be working with children, as I did at PCHAS, and the opportunity is so great that I cannot say no.

I have enjoyed working with the children of Lincoln County and making a difference in their lives. I have many wonderful memories taking them fishing, hiking, riding horses, flying kites, talking for hours in Cuivre Park, enjoying holiday celebrations and bringing them to my little farm, Wishbone Acres Animal Therapy Farm, in the middle of nowhere (Silex, MO). In an effort to make a lasting impact on them, I spent as much time with my mentees as possible before I had to leave them.

I have loved every moment of mentoring. Even when we lacked funding, we just did what we could because I can't see telling kids, "We don't have money so I can't spend time with you." (PCHAS therapeutic mentors are paid). I really enjoy connecting with kids and giving them opportunities they might not otherwise have.

A lot of kids, for example, don't have the chance to ride horses like the ones on my farm. Interacting with the horses taught the children communication skills, respect and love. A horse responds so much better to a gentle touch and kind words than it does to stern commands. One of my most memorable experiences was with Lucy, who suffers from what we call "reactive attachment disorder." She was uncertain about riding, but she did well her very first time. I reminded her to thank her horse, and maybe give him a hug. Later I caught her giving Harry the horse a hug and saying, "I love you, Harry" as I was walking away. She was afraid to show that emotion in front of me, but was not immune to the power of love and expressing that love to Harry.

I thank PCHAS for its investment in children, its determination to make the world a better place. I loved being part of PCHAS and leaving a lasting impression. There are so many people here at PCHAS giving children the love and respect they need to thrive. God bless you, PCHAS, and I hope that you continue to prosper under His guidance.

By Kara McCoy



# Saying Goodbye to Angie Brown



## Angie Brown Retires After 17 Years at PCHAS

In 1998, I joined PCHAS as a receptionist and support to Jim Ford, then Vice President of Public Relations. In that position, I designed our newsletter and other marketing materials, putting to use skills I brought from the printing industry. I had worked in printing and printing management for nearly 15 years.

When the opportunity to serve as Senior Secretary supporting Development and Community Relations arose, I jumped at it. I loved the work and stayed in this position for nearly a decade.

Part of the job was to support our Development Officers as they organized their fundraising luncheons and breakfasts. Together we raised a lot of money for PCHAS and we had a great time doing it. We were a close-knit team. At those events, it was wonderful getting to know the donors.

What a joy it has been to work with hundreds of caring individuals and groups who have a real heart for the children in our care. Every year I opened Christmas packages for the children that came with lovely notes of encouragement from donors. Among the gifts were envelopes that contained a crumpled dollar bill and a sweet note of encouragement to the children. This really touched me.

In the early years, we put a Christmas wishlist in our holiday newsletter. Nearly every year a teddy bear was on the list, but one year a very special teddy bear came in the mail. Inside a small box was a tiny blue teddy bear along with a note written with a shaky hand. The letter came from an elderly woman who said when she read the Christmas list, she remembered the little blue bear

she had when she was a child, and she was sure that a child would enjoy him. She was happy to share the little bear with a child in need.

It was donors like these that I fell in love with. A few years ago, I got a call from a young woman who worked at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois. She had found us on the internet and encouraged her friends to gather Christmas gifts for the children. Their giving has exploded over the years from just one person to many, many people.

I rarely got a chance to meet the children in our care, but I knew their stories. Their stories broke my heart; these youngsters had survived things that I couldn't imagine. These children were, and still are, an inspiration to me.

In 2010, I accepted the position of Director of Foundations and Community Relations and grant writing was added to my plate. We had, and still have, a great grants team and have been fortunate to obtain some major funding from St. Louis Community Children's Service Fund and others.

PCHAS has changed a lot in my 17 years there. When I came to PCHAS in 1998, we served 413 kids, and today we are serving more than 2,200! If my efforts at PCHAS have improved the life of just one child, then my time has been well spent.

By Angie Brown



# Highlights and Insights

## Development Team

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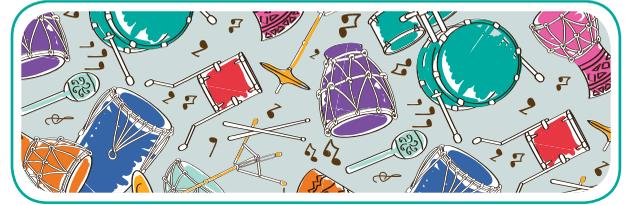
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## Drum Circles Bring Inspiration, Healing and Creative Expression



PCHAS child care worker Jessica Karraker formed a drum circle with the kids at our Residential Treatment Center in Farmington. At first she requested funds to purchase drums, but later decided it would be more meaningful for the kids to make their own drums. Here's Jessica's story, in her own words:

"We helped the boys and girls build drums out of plastic buckets, coffee cans and oatmeal boxes. For drum heads, we used clear mailing tape and balloons or rubber salvaged from inner tubes. After that, we helped the kids decorate their drums. What fun! They were excited about decorating drums they built themselves!

One of the coolest things about drumming is that you don't have to be a musician; you don't even have to keep good time! Anyone and everyone can play. The kids can play without fear of failure and those who want to show off can do so, while those who want to blend in (be less conspicuous) can do so as well, yet everyone is participating. Some kids may show up uninterested or ambivalent about the drum circle in the beginning, but by the end, they're all participating and having fun. Drumming as a group is a magical thing!"

by Jessica Karraker

## Good Times at Annual Mentor Picnic

Each year, the Mentor Program holds a cookout at a local park. Here are two photos from this year's fun event:





## Missouri Gives Benefits to Our Supporters through its Youth Opportunities Program

The State of Missouri joins PCHAS in recognizing the importance of helping children and families in need. Because we provide a needed service to the youth of our state, the Missouri Department of Economic Development's Youth Opportunities Program (YOP) gives tax credits for charitable donations to organizations such as ours. Any individual or corporate donor contributing \$500 or more can qualify for this unique tax credit (assuming Missouri state tax liability.)

Contributions may be made by check, credit card or stock transfer. We will mail you a YOP application after receiving your donation, and we'll handle the rest from there. Take advantage of these tax savings, available on a first-come, first-served basis. We're happy to guide you through the process. **Contact Debra Paulus, 800.383.8147, [debra.paulus@pchas.org](mailto:debra.paulus@pchas.org).**

### You can make a meaningful difference this Christmas in someone's life when you support Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services.

Your gift will change lives and give hope to children and families in crisis.

Thank you for recognizing that the work we do is of critical importance and for giving selflessly in response to Christ's call to help hurting children.

Your gift  
large or small  
will have a **big** impact.



To donate online, visit:  
[missouri.pchas.org/donate](http://missouri.pchas.org/donate)



Presbyterian Children's<sup>SM</sup>  
Homes and Services  
of Missouri

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bridge

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Your gifts may qualify under the Youth Opportunities Program

Would 50% tax credits make giving more fun?

Youth Opportunities Tax credits have become very popular in recent years. Currently we have tax credits available for this year but they won't last!

**Call us for more details on how to qualify at 1-800-383-8147.**



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