

MEETING

MAR/APR 2002



# Challenges

**W**elcome to the first issue of TresslerCare's "Meeting Challenges" newsletter. We hope you find the articles informative and useful in meeting your everyday challenges. The TresslerCare team is committed to providing children, youths, and families with comprehensive, yet individualized care. Throughout all programs, we encourage, model, and promote a sense of responsibility, ownership, trust, value, dignity, respect, and most importantly, "service" as the keystone to success in "meeting challenges." TresslerCare programs belong to the family of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries. The Greek word Diakon literally means "service."

The legacy and strength of TresslerCare programs lie in the human element of supportive, dedicated staff. There is an incredible sense of urgency to move individuals and communities forward in

meeting the challenge of each day, and thereafter. Future issues will appear bi-monthly and reflect on a variety of topics including program highlights, updates, and success stories. We welcome hearing what you find helpful in the newsletter or your recommendations for additional information that may help you succeed in meeting the challenges of serving today's youths.

You may log onto our web site at **[www.diakon.org](http://www.diakon.org)** or **[www.tresslercare.org](http://www.tresslercare.org)**. We invite your comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,

**Linda A. Ciampi**

*Vice President, Congregation, Children, and Family Services  
Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries*

## **Fire causes temporary disruption**

On Jan. 1, a fire broke out in the classroom/dining building of the Wilderness School in Boiling Springs, Pa. The area fire department's prompt response saved the majority of the building. No one was injured and the cause has been ruled accidental. "It's business as usual," says George

Eckenrode, TresslerCare Wilderness Center executive director. "Although the fire disrupted our routine, it has not slowed our commitment or services to the kids. We have adapted, and all wilderness-related activities are operating." The damaged building should be fully operational by early April.

## **INSIDE:**

Learn more about the TresslerCare Continuum.... providing a progressive range of services.



# TRESSLERCARE

## Offering a continuum of services for Pennsylvania's children and youth

With the opening of homes for orphans in the late 1800s, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries—formed by the January 2000 affiliation of Tressler Lutheran Services and Lutheran Services Northeast—began a long history of serving the needs of Pennsylvania's children. More than 130 years later, Diakon continues its commitment to improving the lives of children through the efforts of TresslerCare. Since the 1970s, TresslerCare has been a leader in specialized services for children who have been adjudicated delinquent or dependent by county juvenile courts or children and youth services. By developing programs that support TresslerCare's goal of offering a continuum of care that helps young people become productive, contributing members of society, TresslerCare provides hope and opportunity for children and their families.

TresslerCare's individual programs can be used in conjunction with one another as needed to provide a variety of interventions, strategies, and resources. The TresslerCare continuum includes the following services:

### *Educational Programs*

Throughout its unique continuum of services, TresslerCare emphasizes the need to learn skills for success in life through intriguing vocational and educational programs, often linked with schools and other institutions to provide state-of-the-art training. TresslerCare helps youths gain life skills with a range of specialized educational programs, including Independent Living Skills Training and Day Treatment programs.

### *Foster Care*

TresslerCare Treatment Foster Care has a distinguished history of service, having been one of the first programs in 1976 to receive state funding to offer a community-based alternative to delinquent youths who were housed at what is today the State Correctional Institution at Camp Hill.

Since then, TresslerCare Foster Care has grown markedly in service and scope, so that today it offers tiered levels of care in relation to the child's need. Based on emotional, behavioral, medical, and developmental assessments, staff members recommend the level of care they believe will be most effective. Tiers range from traditional through specialized and treatment to medical. In addition, the program has Foster-to-Adopt and Kinship Care components. Services are offered to youths from birth through 18 years of age who have been adjudicated dependent or delinquent.

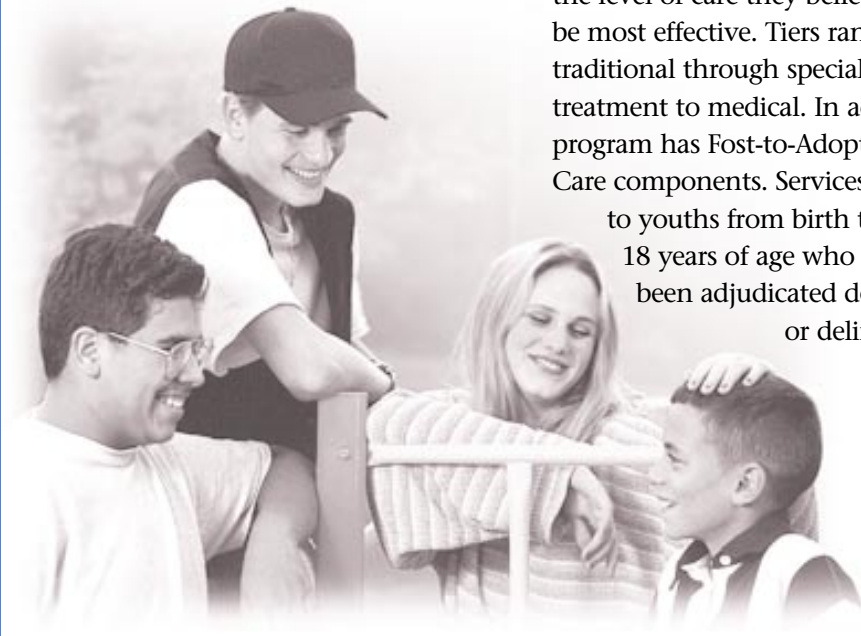
### *In-Home Services*

In-Home Services brings counseling services to young people where they can receive maximum privacy and support—in their home environment. The individualized attention of our in-home counseling programs allows youths to achieve their optimum level of self-confidence and independence. Often developed in relation to specific local needs, In-Home Services programs range from after-care and prevention services designed to reduce institutionalization to specialized in-home treatment for youths who have sexually offended. Treatment frequently focuses on parents and other family members as well. The TresslerCare team serves as a liaison among home, school, and other community services, working with each family to ensure successful treatment.

### *Wilderness School*

Located on 170 forested acres near Boiling Springs known as the Wilderness Center, the TresslerCare Wilderness School offers the unique experience of a residential treatment program combined with the challenges of outdoor activities and the wilderness. The Wilderness School experience is built on five pillar values: respect, responsibility, trust, effort, and courage.

The Wilderness School offers a wide range of challenging activities year round, including work opportunities and vocational and practical skills training in culinary arts, horticulture, independent living preparation, and vocational trades. With a fully accredited, on-campus academic program and a summer school enrichment program, the Wilderness School ensures that students keep up with academic studies.



# THE TRESSLER CARE CONTINUUM

Residential  
Wilderness School  
(Boiling Springs)

Specialized  
Outpatient Counseling  
(Mechanicsburg)

Comprehensive  
In-Home Services  
(DuBois, Mechanicsburg & Downingtown)

Day  
Treatment  
(DuBois)

Weekend  
Alternative Program  
(Boiling Springs)

31-Day  
Wilderness Course  
(Boiling Springs)

Foster Care  
Treatment  
(Mechanicsburg)

90-Day  
Challenge Plus  
(Boiling Springs)

The TresslerCare Wilderness School serves adjudicated adolescent males, ages 13 to 17, who are referred through juvenile probation and children & youth agencies.

### **Weekend Alternative Program**

The Weekend Alternative Program provides alternative treatment to long-term placement for court-adjudicated youths. Located at TresslerCare's Wilderness Center, the 10-week program offers a safe, structured, drug-free environment during the time teenagers are most tempted by mischief and negative peer influences—on the weekends. A variety of group activities helps teenagers discard negative habits, accept responsibility for actions, make better decisions, and learn the values of honesty, respect and teamwork.

The Weekend Alternative Program is available to court-adjudicated youths, 13 to 18 years of age, in central Pennsylvania as well as from the Delaware and Chester counties region as an alternative to long-term placement. It is provided in conjunction with other community-based services.

### **31-Day Wilderness Challenge**

Taking place in such dramatic locales as the Appalachian Trail in Pennsylvania and the Pisgah National Forest in North Carolina, the 31-Day Wilderness Challenge provides a powerful, adventure-based intervention for delinquent and dependent adolescents. This intense month-long program builds self-confidence, improves problem-solving skills, and promotes effective communication and teamwork.

By accomplishing demanding emotional and physical challenges, participants face and overcome adversity in an unfamiliar environment. Regardless of weather, participants live outdoors for the entire 31 days and are required to successfully complete all activities.

The program, which is based at the TresslerCare Wilderness Center, is effective as a preventive measure to avoid out-of-home placement, or as a transitional service.

### **Wilderness Challenge+Plus**

Following participation in the 31-Day Wilderness Challenge, youths in Wilderness Challenge+Plus reinforce their successes with an eight-week stay at the Wilderness School. This portion of their stay focuses on education, community service, and life-skills training. Participants are required to accomplish pre-established goals to successfully complete the program. This short-term, treatment-oriented intervention program is best for the adolescent male who needs out-of-home placement with a goal of returning to his family or other identified resource following release from the program.

For more information on any of these services, visit [www.tresslercare.org](http://www.tresslercare.org).

## WILDERNESS CENTER LAUNCHES CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

### **“The Wilderness Challenge: A chance to succeed”**

With their eyes focused on a ground-breaking project for this spring, staff members and supporters of the Wilderness Center in Boiling Springs are excited about a \$2 million capital campaign that will fund the center’s new living area, all-purpose building, and classrooms. According to George Eckenrode, center executive director, “For the past 20 years, the center has filled an important niche for county agencies seeking an alternative to traditional intervention services. The Wilderness Center programs have served youths from more



than 57 counties throughout Pennsylvania. With the planned improvements, we have the potential to expand services

*One of the many physical challenges participants face on the Wilderness Challenge*

to additional county and out-of-state agencies, increasing the number of children we can help.” The planned improvements include the construction and attachment of two 16-bed wings to an existing cottage that currently houses 14 youths, increasing the residential program’s total number of beds from 39 to 48. Funding from the campaign will also go toward the construction of an all-purpose building that will house a gymnasium and classroom/ activity space. “These improvements are exactly what our programs need,” says Eckenrode. “Our numbers continue to grow and the facility upgrades will ensure that we can continue to help troubled youths return to productive, fulfilling lives.”

For information on how you can help the Wilderness Center meet its capital campaign goal, readers may contact George Eckenrode at [717.258.3168](tel:717.258.3168) or by e-mail at [eckenrodeg@diakon.org](mailto:eckenrodeg@diakon.org).