



Challenges

TresslerCare's Adjudicated Youth Services

Throughout the past several months, discussions have occurred about the vision for TresslerCare, with a focus on development and expansion of this core ministry of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries.

As a result, we needed to address our structure, so that we could reach our goal of providing a comprehensive continuum of programs for children, youths, and families.

...a comprehensive continuum of services with singular leadership, and an intensive emphasis on quality assurance and customer satisfaction.

Therefore, two service units in Diakon's Congregation, Children, and Family Services merged. Community-Based Services (Foster Care Services, Aftercare and Prevention Services, etc.), previously managed by Craig Smith, and

TresslerCare Wilderness Center Services (Wilderness School, Challenge+Plus, Weekend Alternative Program, and Wilderness Course), previously managed by George Eckenrode, have been reorganized into TresslerCare's Adjudicated Youth Services (AYS).

After extensive examination of the structure and operations of the separate service units, it became evident future success was dependent upon focusing on a comprehensive continuum of services with singular leadership, and an intensive emphasis on quality assurance and customer satisfaction.

Effective Oct. 7, Craig Smith assumed responsibility for leadership and management of TresslerCare. Craig's experience and commitment to adjudicated youths encompass more than 20 years of dedicated service through TresslerCare.

Also effective at that time, George Eckenrode assumed responsibility as marketing/fund raising director for TresslerCare. George will continue in the role of coordinating efforts related to the Wilderness Center capital campaign, while

placing focused energy on TresslerCare's ability to meet with county and private providers to hear and address needs and concerns related to programming for youth.

George reports directly to Craig Smith, and his office is now located at 960 Century Drive, Mechanicsburg. The scope of George's "feet in the street" activities will include TresslerCare's entire continuum throughout Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

Linda Ciampi
Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries

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TresslerCare foster parent Fran Denny named Foster Parent of the Year

For 16 years, teenage boys in need of foster care have found a loving home and an understanding listener in the form of Fran Denny.



Fran Denny

The Pennsylvania State Foster Parent Association recently named Denny, who lives in York, Pa., the Foster Parent of the Year.

“What an honor,” says Denny. “I know there are a lot of foster parents out there that are real good. I was very honored.”

Denny, who has five children of her own, became a foster parent after her husband passed away. “I had a big house. I had four bedrooms and a finished basement,” she says, adding that instead of selling the house, she decided to fill it with children. “I decided to become a foster parent. I was used to having kids around.”

Having cared for more than 100 children since she began working with TresslerCare Foster Care, Denny admits foster parenting is challenging, but rewarding.

“[The children] come back and tell me that I’ve helped them,” she says. “One boy, who was 17 when he left, comes back two or three times a year. It takes him two and a half hours to get here.”

Denny also credits TresslerCare’s training for having a positive impact on her success as a foster parent. “I learned a lot through training. I went into [foster parenting] a little naïve, maybe with rose-colored glasses,” she says. “But, I learned over the years to take off the rose-colored glasses and see what’s going on beneath the surface.”

TresslerCare is “there when you need them. You don’t have to worry. You can call any time, any hour, and you get results,”

She has also found a support system in TresslerCare that she believes others don’t match. TresslerCare is “there when you need them. You don’t have to worry. You can call any time, any hour, and you get results,” she says. “They are loyal, therefore I am loyal to them. They’ve never let me down.”

2003 Course Schedule

TresslerCare
31-day Wilderness Challenge &
90-day Wilderness
Challenge+Plus

- January 13 – February 12
- January 27 – February 26
- February 10 – March 12
- February 24 – March 26
- March 10 – April 9
- March 17 – April 16
- March 31 – April 30
- April 7 – May 7
- April 21 – May 21
- May 5 – June 4
- June 9 – July 9 (Double)
- June 16 – July 16
- June 30 – July 30
- July 7 – August 6
- July 21 – August 20 (Double)
- August 4 – September 3
- August 11 – September 10
- August 25 – September 24
- September 8 – October 8
- September 22 – October 22
- October 6 – November 5
- October 13 – November 12
- October 27 – November 26
- November 17 – December 17 (Double)

For more information on course openings or to refer contact:

Jason Brode

Wilderness Challenge director,

Phone: (717) 258-3168

www.tresslercare.org

Reorganized TresslerCare focuses on service continuum

TresslerCare's recent reorganization is a return to its earlier structure in which one person was responsible for the continuum of programs, says Craig Smith, newly appointed executive director, TresslerCare Services.

"It was an awkward structure [prior to the reorganization] in that the lack of sole responsibility for management of the TresslerCare programs caused confusion, both internally and externally," he says. "This will be an opportunity to enhance the continuum of services and connect some of the different programs in new and creative ways that will ultimately benefit kids and families."

"Responding quickly and effectively to what our referral agencies tell us will help us serve more kids, more effectively."

Under the new structure, all of the programs continue with a director at each site. George Eckenrode, familiar to many people for his work with the Wilderness Center, takes on the role of director of marketing and fund raising.



"The two benefits are having everything under one administrative manager and adding a position focused on keeping in touch with our referring agencies and listening to their needs," Smith adds.

Eckenrode says he was prepared for the new role and jumped in with both feet. "I started on this a while ago. In the past year or so I have been taking a more active role in marketing the Wilderness Center programs. When the decision was made, it was a pretty easy transition."

The highly competitive nature of TresslerCare's business necessitated the restructuring, according to Eckenrode. "Pennsylvania, in particular, has a lot of private providers who are vying for referrals of youths who come through the juvenile court or Children and Youth systems," he says. "It is extremely important that these referring agencies are aware of the services that we have to offer."

Part of the enhancement of services will include greater emphasis on treatment at the residential Wilderness School, according to Smith.

"When the Wilderness School was started, it was designed to be an experiential learning environment as a way to reach kids. While this is a valuable approach, it is not enough," he says. "The kids come with a lot of issues and need a variety of therapeutic approaches to meet their emotional needs."

Because of its reputation for providing high quality services, TresslerCare is working even harder to ensure those services remain strong and to improve them through a comprehensive program of outcome measures and continuous feedback.

"We want to give folks concrete data on how we are doing," he says. "Responding quickly and effectively to what our referral agencies tell us will help us serve more kids, more effectively."

Programs meet children's needs

With the creation of a specialized unit designed to focus on the unique issues involved with Foster-Adopt and Kinship Care services, TresslerCare Foster Care is redefining how the agency provides permanency for children.

The Foster-Adopt program helps families not only open their homes to a foster child, but also make a commitment to adopt the child, if the child cannot be reunified with his or her birth family.

"We want to bridge the gap between a child's initial need for temporary care and a child's long-term need for a permanent home," explains Marilyn Sutton, newly appointed clinical supervisor for both the Kinship Care and Foster-Adopt programs.

TresslerCare's Foster-Adopt program is strengthened by the existing relationship between Tressler Adoption Services and TresslerCare Foster Care.

"Many foster care agencies are seeking adoption licensure so they can meet the needs of children in care by providing permanency in their lives," explains Sutton. "We already have an established working relationship with the Tressler Adoption staff, based in York. They have adoptive parents who are willing to take children who are still in the foster care system by becoming foster-adopt parents."

The foster-adopt parents are required to follow the same Department of Welfare regulations as all other foster parents. "We now have the close coordination needed to ensure that all DPW requirements are met and to assist in making a smooth transition from foster care to adoption for the family and child," Sutton says.

Kinship Care program

TresslerCare's Kinship Care program provides full-time care for a child who is separated from his parents and placed in the home of a caregiver, who may be a relative, family friend or neighbor. For formal kinship care to occur, the child must be separated from his

parents because of abuse, neglect, dependency, abandonment or special medical circumstances.

This type of care has actually existed informally for a long time, says Sutton.

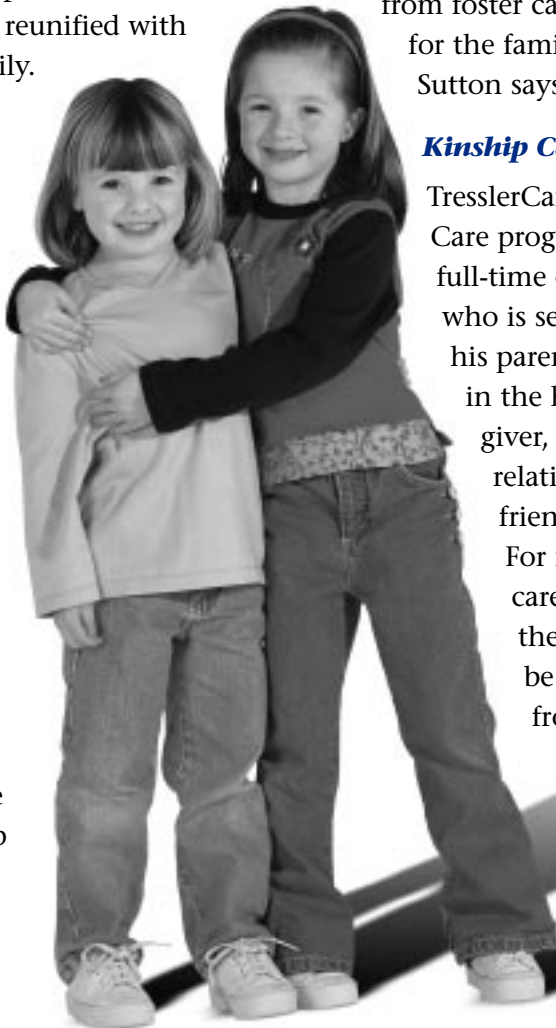
"We wanted to be as non-intrusive as possible and to focus our attention on the entire family. We want to empower the family to take care of the child."

"What is new is that kin or relatives can now go to the Children and Youth agency and say they would like it to become formal so they can receive cash assistance or the benefits to help subsidize the child's care," she says. "It is almost like foster care. It follows the same regulations except the care is provided by someone the child is connected to and comfortable with."

In many cases, the child has already been with the family two or three years.

"There is already an attachment," Sutton adds. "Kinship care also inflicts less trauma on the child when they are living with a relative. It is family. All children desire to be with family."

TresslerCare's program sets out to be unique by offering tiered levels of



Wilderness Center Reunion *Graduate shares success*

Kinship Care based on the frequency and intensity of services necessary to meet the identified needs of the child and family.

“We wanted to be as non-intrusive as possible and to focus our attention on the entire family. We want to empower the family to take care of the child,” says Sutton.

TresslerCare has developed an adjunct orientation training for Kinship Care-givers to address the specific issues and concerns associated with providing this type of care. Additionally, all treatment team meetings, individual and family therapy, and individual parent training will take place in the kinship provider’s home.

Although most kinship referrals presently are coming from Cumberland County Children and Youth Services, referrals will eventually be considered from all local counties.

“Currently, it is estimated that four out of five kinship placements occur informally without official involvement,” explains Sutton.

“Once informal kinship caregivers realize there is a way to formally receive supportive services and financial assistance, it is anticipated the program will need to expand quickly to keep up with the demand for services.”

On Saturday, Sept. 28, James Morant returned to TresslerCare Wilderness Center in Boiling Springs. The first time Morant arrived at the school, he had been an angry young man trying to find his place in the world and positive he wouldn't find it in a residential treatment program for delinquent youths.

The second time around, things were different.

Morant was there to take part in the Wilderness Center’s 7th Annual Student Reunion.

“Every year we celebrate the success of these young people, who graduated from our program and went on to succeed in the community,” explains George Eckenrode, director of marketing and fund raising for Diakon Adjudicated Youth Services.

According to the 19-year-old Morant, he attended the reunion to share how the program had affected his life. “I want everybody to know that the program did well for me,” he says. “[The students] will listen to me because I’ve been in the same their shoes.”

As a 15-year-old transferred from a local detention center, Morant

entered the Wilderness Center intent on keeping his stay short. “When I first arrived, like anybody, I didn’t want to be there,” he says. “Whatever it took, I was going to try to get kicked out.”

But when Morant’s cousin died not long after he arrived, his attitude changed.

“I was about to run away,” he says. “But they sat me down and explained to me why that wouldn’t be the best thing to do. I saw that they weren’t giving up on me and that they really cared. I decided I would try to open myself up and see what happened.”

As time passed, Morant found what he needed in group sessions where participants set weekly goals for themselves. “We would confront each other on how we thought each other had done on his goals. It gave everybody a chance to reach out and help his peers without staff intervening,” says Morant, adding that he also learned how to express himself.

Five years later, Morant is contemplating a military career, having successfully completed high school and published poetry.

This day, he walked confidently among current and former students and staff attending the reunion, enjoying the easy camaraderie—and enjoying his success.



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REGIONAL NEWS

TresslerCare Capital Region

- In early October, the TresslerCare Foster Care program restructured to increase capacity as the result of continuing growth. Marilyn Sutton was promoted to clinical supervisor of the newly created Fost/Adopt, KinshipCare unit of the TresslerCare Foster Care program. Dee Davis was promoted to clinical supervisor within the treatment unit of the TresslerCare Foster Care program.
- Jane Yeatter, April Brent, Kathy Selgas, and Shanen Turk-Geller of the Specialized In-home Treatment Program attended the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA) Conference in Montreal, Canada, in October. ATSA is the professional organization that provides practice standards and guidelines, as well as a professional code of ethics, for treatment providers. Yeatter, Selgas and Turk-Geller, as well as Bill Love, are ATSA members. The ATSA Conference is an international forum during which the most recent research and interventions are presented. Treatment staff returned with many ideas and tools to improve the assessment process and program interventions.