

Keeping children and families together

Family Preservation services stabilize and support families in crisis to keep kids safely in their homes

By Nancy Kortemeyer

At age 45, Teresa has learned way too many lessons from the school of hard knocks. She knows that this is it. Either she turns her life around or loses custody of her last child.

She'd be the first to admit she hasn't been a model parent. She's made serious mistakes that have cost her and her family dearly. Several years ago, she lost custody of her oldest children due to substance abuse.

Then, a year ago, she lost another son in a drowning accident.

Drowning in grief herself after that, Teresa struggled to find the motivation to manage even the simplest tasks of her everyday life. Some days it was tough even to get out of bed. Teresa tried to manage the best way she could, but still, it seemed like her world was crashing down around her. And then, amid allegations of child abuse, she came home one day to find that her 12-year-old daughter had been removed by Children's Services, and that she herself was headed to jail.

She hit rock bottom at that point.

But eight months later, Teresa had pulled her life together enough that Children's Services was ready to consider a reunification plan for her daughter, who had been living with a grandparent. They enlisted the help of Beech Brook's Family Preservation Program to manage the plan.

When case manager Michelle Flynn arrived on the scene, she saw a mom devastated by the pain and guilt of her past mistakes and undermined by a long history of substance abuse, domestic violence and other trauma.



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Message from Debra Rex, President/CEO

*Every story has an ending, and if the story is any good,
the ending is a new beginning.*



*Debra Rex, M.A., M.Ed.
President and CEO*

On June 3, a beautiful summer day, our staff, board members and long-time friends of Beech Brook gathered on campus to mark the ending of a significant chapter in our 164-year story and the beginning of a new one.

of providing residential treatment programs. We know now that no matter how hard and how well we work to heal the emotional scars of a troubled child, we can never give back the chance for a happy childhood, free of the trauma which wounds so deeply and so permanently.

And so, we are choosing to put our resources to work to do everything humanly possible to prevent the abuse and neglect and behavioral health issues which devastate children's lives and to strengthen families before the lasting hurt begins.

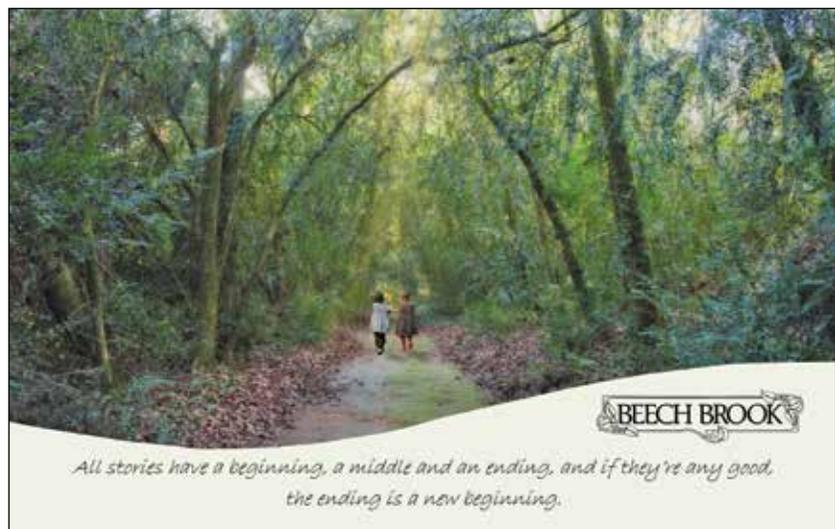
We all know that in every story, there comes a time when you have to choose between turning the page or closing the book.

And so, we have chosen to turn the page, as those who came before us did when the time was right...from orphanage to residential treatment...from campus only programs to community-based treatment services...and now again to expand into prevention and early intervention programs, each a chapter in a long story that began in 1852.

We are proud of the good work that has been done here over the past many years and grateful for the opportunity we have had to serve so many troubled children. But we know that we will **continue** to do good work in the days to come, linked always to our past and future by an unwavering commitment to our mission.

We begin this new chapter guided by the lessons we have learned through many decades

Thank you for all the ways in which you have cared for Beech Brook. We look forward to your continuing support and participation as we write the next chapter of hope and healing for our community's children and families.





1) A balloon launch symbolized the letting go of the past with hopes for the future at the end of the closing ceremony for the residential treatment programs.

2) Board vice-chair and long-time supporter Kathy Pender shared her feelings about the solemnity of the occasion and the need to look forward to Beech Brook's future.

3) Among the attendees were these three women who played vital roles in Beech Brook's rebuilding of the campus in the 1970s and who continue to be strong supporters for the agency's mission today: Patricia Lightbody, life director and co-chair of the capital campaign in the 1970s; Mary Conway, former board member for many years; and Bunny Loomis, former board member and development director during the campaign to rebuild the campus as it looks today.

4) As leader of the campus programs for many years, Linda Schettler took this opportunity to give thanks to her team members who had worked so hard, day and night, to care for the troubled children in the residential and day treatment programs.



Few traumas can compare to that of children removed from their biological families and their own homes. There are times when there is no other choice for the child's safety; however, in many other cases, with the right help and support, families can overcome their problems and keep their children safely in their homes.

When families are in crisis, Beech Brook's Family Preservation program brings help, healing and hope to prevent the devastation of a shattered home or to help a child re-enter the family after a time in out-of-home care.

Family Preservation is an intensive, short-term crisis intervention program that is provided to families in their own homes. The services are designed to stabilize the family through intensive intervention, improved parenting and communication skills, and linkages to vital community resources.

Last year Beech Brook's Family Preservation Team of five licensed case managers/therapists, under the direction of Dawn Brodnick, LISW-S, served more than 160 families.

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But she also recognized a mom who was determined, this time, not to let the past repeat itself and rob her of her last chance to be a better parent.

It took time to gain Teresa's trust, but once Michelle broke through the barrier, she found a woman who was honest, open and committed to changing her life for the sake of her daughter.

"She wants her daughter to have a normal life and to grow up in a safe home where there are not caseworkers constantly coming and going," Michelle explains. "She sees the patterns of her past life. She knows she has destroyed the family unit, and she knows this needs to stop."

On a typical visit, they begin by discussing what's been happening over the past week.

"We talk about what steps she's been taking, what else needs to be done. What does she need to accomplish in the coming week?" Michelle says. "I ask her, 'What are the little steps you can take every day to keep moving forward? What do you need to do for your daughter?'"

At every visit they go over the treatment plan, reviewing the goals she must meet to regain full custody of her daughter. So far, she's satisfied all her requirements for Children's Services, and she's working hard to meet her court obligations.

Michelle also makes sure the basic needs of the household are being managed well and that the environment is a safe and healthy one for Teresa and her daughter. They work on developing good coping skills for times of stress and on the importance of maintaining a strict daily regimen to keep her headed in the right direction.

With nine years of experience in Family Preservation, three of those at Beech Brook, Michelle, an LSW, calls this the ideal Family Preservation case. "Teresa's just been a model client. She's honest and open and, despite her tough exterior, very sweet."

In fact, when Michelle asked if she could share her case as a success story, Teresa broke down with emotion. It's the first time anyone had ever told her she was successful at anything.

In a case such as Teresa's, involving reunification work, the Family Preservation case manager usually has a four-month time period to work with the family. And although they schedule regular appointments during the day, the family knows that their case manager is available any time, day or night, if they're needed. That reassurance is really comforting to families, Michelle says.

In addition to the work they do in the home to successfully complete the case plan, Michelle will make sure Teresa and her daughter are linked to the appropriate community resources and supports they need to keep the family stable and heading in the right direction. They'll set goals for the future and help develop a plan for how to reach those.

Michelle finds Family Preservation truly rewarding. "You have to love this specific type of work or you can get burned out very quickly," she said.

She gives major credit to Dawn Brodnick, director of Beech Brook's Family Preservation program, for the success of their work and her own job satisfaction. "Dawn has so much knowledge and experience in this field. She's always willing to sit and talk about a case, and she's very supportive. But she's also constantly challenging us to move forward."

After 24 years in Family Preservation at Beech Brook, Dawn Brodnick has encountered just about every kind of situation you can imagine, from her days as a direct service worker till now as program director.

Even after you've read all the paper work about a new case, she says, the situation you encounter on your first visit may be very different than you expect. She trains her staff to be prepared to do whatever is needed to get the family back on an even keel.

Once they assess the situation, they spring into action quickly since they have only 60-90 days to stabilize the situation, provide the in-home services that are needed and link the family to the community resources and follow-up treatment they will need.

Her staff uses an evidence-based curriculum called *Parenting Wisely* to determine how to address a particular family's needs, she explains. In addition to working on parenting skills, her staff may also need to work on bedtime routines, meal planning, how to choose healthy snacks, building structure into daily routines, getting children ready for school, and how to keep the environment as clean and safe as possible for the children.

Just as important as the services they provide, Dawn believes, is their focus on helping the parents understand the critical role they play in their children's lives. Many of them, without good role models from their own childhoods, just don't realize how much their children need them and how much power they have to influence their lives in a positive and permanent way.

Will you help Beech Brook preserve families?

Preserving a family or reunifying parents and children after the trauma of separation is among the most important and meaningful work that Beech Brook does.

Beech Brook's Family Preservation Program has benefitted families throughout Northeast Ohio for many years. It's a program that will continue to be a priority in our focus on community-based prevention and early intervention services.

You can be part of this essential work by making a gift to Beech Brook today!

DONATE ONLINE

Simply visit www.beechbrook.org to make your tax-deductible donation.

A recurring monthly gift is also a great way to ensure that resources are always there to address the ongoing needs of families.

It's easy to do! Just indicate the amount and frequency of your gift by using the drop-down menu of the "Recurring Payment Frequency" box on the online donation form. Your donation will automatically be charged to your credit card each month. You can change the amount of your monthly gift or cancel at any time.

Thank you for your support! Please contact the Development Department for more information or answers to your questions at 216.831.2255 or jestinedurf@beechbrook.org



Building strong families and healthy children... Our focus for the future

With the closing of our residential treatment programs, so long identified with Beech Brook, many people have asked for more information about the community-based services which have become our main focus now.

The fact is, for more than 20 years, Beech Brook has been steadily expanding our presence in the community because **we know that prevention and early intervention programs work!**

- We know that, through **parent education, teen parent and anger management classes**, we can break the cycle of child abuse and neglect and spare children a lifetime of emotional scars.
- By identifying mental health problems in **early childhood**, we can provide the right services when they can have the most life-changing impact.

- When children are struggling with emotional and behavioral issues that are disrupting school and family life, our **outpatient therapy** helps get them back on track.
- Through programs such as **family preservation**, we can stabilize families in crisis and treat problems before they become so severe that children must be removed from their homes.
- We can provide the **school-based therapy and support** services that help more than 5,000 children succeed in school and in life in Cuyahoga, Summit, Lorain, Geauga and Lucas counties.
- By providing mentors for at-risk youths, we can increase the stability of their foster care placements or help reduce the chances for an out-of-home placement.

- When parents reach the difficult decision to divorce, we can help them understand and minimize the traumatic impact of this change on their children through our **divorce education seminars**.
- Through our **comprehensive sex education** classes, we can provide factual, age-appropriate information that helps adolescents understand and make good choices.
- And when children can't stay safely in their families, our caring team of skilled **foster parents** can be there to provide guidance and support and keep them from further harm.

Through these services, **we'll touch the lives of 18,000 children and families** in our community this year.

Beech Ball... We had a ball!

Talk about a championship team! It was a major victory for children and families at First Energy Stadium, the site of this year's Beech Ball! Thanks to the combined efforts of our generous sponsors and Beech Ball guests, we raised more than \$190,000 to support Beech Brook's prevention and early intervention programs.

We are so grateful to our Honorary Chairs and Presenting Sponsors, Kathy and Jim Pender, for their outstanding support this year and always! And we greatly appreciate the leadership of our dynamic trio of event chairs: Theresa and Michael Bidwell; Tracy and David Crandall; and Tracy and Tom Seifert...truly all champions for children.

Against a backdrop of our beautiful city skyline on a perfect spring evening, partygoers enjoyed dinner and bidding on an array of silent and live auction packages, which included luxurious vacations in Sedona and the Dominican Republic; a private cocktail party for 20 on the 38th floor of the Terminal Tower; a special evening in a loge at Progressive Field; and, of course, a set of hand-painted Adirondack chairs made by the children at Beech Brook.

Following dinner, guests sat in rapt attention as staff member Darnell Carter, coordinator of Beech Brook's Father and other Parenting classes, told the stories of the clients he has served at the Family Drop-In Center. It was a great lead-in to the Beacon of Hope auction, which raised nearly \$50,000...that's on top of the \$19,000 in pre-event gifts given in honor of our Honorary Chairs, Kathy and Jim Pender!

Thanks to all who made this year's Beech Ball a great success! We're looking forward to seeing you next year!



Honorary Chairs and Presenting Sponsors Kathy and Jim Pender



Co-chairs Michael and Theresa Bidwell with Rick Dorman and Barbara Roman and Doug and Jennifer Pinkerton



Jim and Cindy Crosby with committee member Jane Small and Gary Small, our newest member of the Beech Brook Board of Directors



Auction co-chairs Lisa Jacobs and Katie Clark with their husbands David Jacobs and Jeremy Clark



Annette Lowe and Dick Michel, honorary board member



Beech Brook staff member Darnell Carter set the stage for the Beacon of Hope.



Dancing topped off another successful Beech Ball!



Tony Quarles and the Discovery Band were a big hit!



President and CEO Debra Rex



Colleen and Phil Dawson, Board chair, with Jack Herrick



Co-chairs Dave and Tracy Crandall



Co-chairs Tracy and Tom Seifert

Beech Brook 5K Run/Walk raises more than \$13,500!

Nature smiled on us this year with a beautiful morning for our sixth annual Beech Brook 5K Run/Walk, sponsored by Fleet Feet Sports.

Runners of every age and speed gave it their best shot while others followed the course through Pepper Pike at a more leisurely pace, enjoying the sunshine and company of family and friends.

Special thanks to our planning and fundraising committee: Jill Schwartz, Tom Seifert, Jeremy Clark, Megan Fellingner and Jennifer Pinkerton!

Congratulations, too, goes to Tyler Clark, our top individual fundraiser and best runner in his class!



On your mark, get set....



Board members Phil Dawson, Jill Schwartz, Gary Small, Tom Seifert and Kathy Pender turned out to show their support!



Running clubs brought lots more kids to the race!



Planning committee member Jeremy Clark and son Tyler, a top runner and fundraiser!



Board member Harry Holmes and wife Sandy are perennial supporters of the event.

Save the Date!

We hope you can join us for the
164th Annual Meeting
of the Beech Brook Board of Directors.

Thursday, September 29, 2016
5:30 p.m.

Fenn-Wright Center
Beech Brook Campus

Watch for your invitation in the mail!



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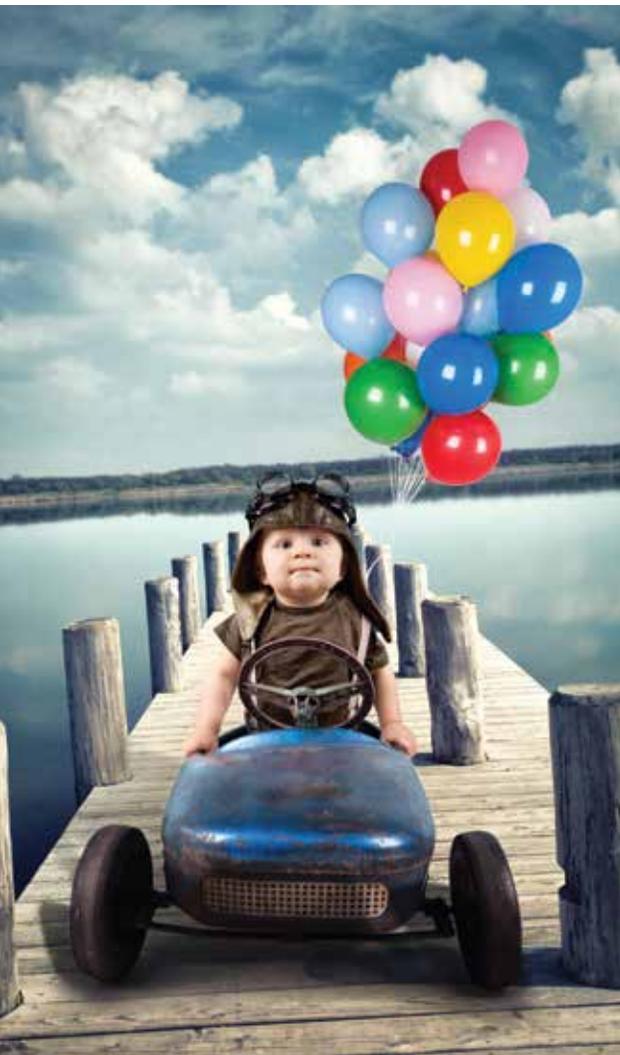
Beech Brook's Mission

To advance the well-being and self-sufficiency of children, youth and families by providing effective, innovative physical and behavioral health, permanency, educational and related services and by serving as a strong voice for children, youth and families.

216.831.2255

www.beechbrook.org

Beech Brook is a contract agency of the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County.



FULL SPEED AHEAD FOR BEECH BALL 2017

FRIDAY, APRIL 28

We're gearing up for next year's Beech Ball! Mark your calendars now for April 28 and save the date for our next party.

We're still finalizing the location but we'll let you know soon how to set your GPS! Stay tuned!

We're delighted to announce our Honorary Chairs and leadership for Beech Ball 2017.

HONORARY CHAIRS

Judy and Walt Stuelpe

CO-CHAIRS

Tracy and David Crandall

Tracy and Tom Seifert

Jane and Gary Small