



# LEHIGH VALLEY FAMILIES TOGETHER INC.

## ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

*Providing In-home Intervention, Reunification, Visit Coaching, Resource Family Care and Family Group Decision Making*

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## Message from the CEO

The end of the fiscal year brings the opportunity to look forward as well as to reflect historically. By all accounts, it was another successful year for the organization. This was the year that our reunification foster care program started to rival in scope our in-home services. I anticipate that this trend will continue, and that our foster care program will eventually eclipse in size our other services.

It's important to know why Lehigh Valley Families Together started doing foster care in the first place. Initially, we exclusively were providing reunification and in-home services. After a few years, it became clear that the ability to do successful reunification work often times was predicated on the foster family or kinship family where a child resided. Communication between the resource parents and the biological parents was critical in maintaining continuity for the child's sake, both in placement, and in order to transition home. Children can see when people are working in concert on their behalf, and are much more willing to accommodate the temporary nature of placement. With this in mind, we established our own program in 2005. This way, we could ensure that all of our resource parents believed and understood their role of supporting reunification whenever possible. Plus, we could encourage and train them in order to maximize their interest in reunification. Initially, we were not certain how many families this would resonate with, but fortunately, it's turned out that the majority of people that apply to be resource parents with us clearly believe in the concept. Those that don't, do not become part of our team.

Recently, we entertained the idea of allowing resource parents that want to be a legal risk or adoption option, the opportunity to apply, provided that there is the primary focus of working towards reunification with children placed in their home. Realistically, there are going to be times that no matter the effort, things don't work out for a successful reunification. In order to mitigate disruption for a child who has resided for some time in a home, it is always a positive to have that option available for permanency. Going forward, we have decided to move in this direction and allow interested families to apply. We will keep you updated on this in future annual reports.

The annual report this year includes some familiar topics such as the stories of the families and children as well as the organizations that we have partnered with during the last year. We could not do it without them.

As always we are grateful for the opportunity to provide our services to the counties in which we live.

Sincerely,

Steve Brong, President/ CEO