MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

It is said that the truest measure of society is found in the way it treats its children. This quote resonates in the work done by the staff of Three Rivers Adoption Council (TRAC). Through the efforts and dedication of TRAC Board and staff, children who would otherwise have languished in the child welfare system now have permanence in the security of a loving family. Furthering TRAC’s mission of ensuring permanence for all children is the commitment to assuring these newly formed families have the support needed to develop healthy relationships while assisting each child to heal appropriately from their traumatic pasts.

There are many notable moments that we can look back on with pride that are indicative of the work over this past year. From the Chat N Chill support groups where both parents and children can share their challenges and triumphs on their adoption journey, to the specialized therapeutic weekend retreats, designed to assist participants in the development of skills and strategies for healing and relationship building, TRAC’s programming has been witness to the transformation of once fragile lives into stronger, more secure individuals, who despite their pasts, are better able to face their futures.

Our commitment to the adoption process included training to professionals in efforts to broaden the basis of knowledge for those who interact in the lives of the children we serve. Education for professionals began with a 2-day conference on trauma informed care where 100 participants from the fields of child welfare, medicine, mental health and education were equipped with information and tools that enable them to search for the answer to the question ‘what happened in the life of this child’, with follow-up sessions provided during monthly TRAC meetings.

With all of the heart and dedication TRAC staff put into their efforts, nothing is more pleasing than to have this work validated by those outside of the field. Truly one of the highlights of this year was TRAC receiving an Honorable Mention from the Mutual of America Partnership Awards. Being named one of the top three organizations nationally that shows exemplary leadership by facilitating partnerships with KDKA-TV, Allegheny County Children, Youth and Families, and the Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network, working collaboratively with others on behalf of children and families has been, and will continue to be, primary in the work we do.

While we are proud of the work we have done, the challenge for us remains finding permanence for the more than 120,000 children nationwide that still wait. For them, we look forward to the next year with excitement and determination as we work to provide them a life of security and promise.

Jacqueline D. Wilson, Ph.D., LSW
CEO
MISSION & VISION

Three Rivers Adoption Council’s (TRAC) mission is to create and provide adoption opportunities and a range of services for all children growing up without permanent, caring families. TRAC’s vision is to be viewed statewide as the highest quality provider of innovative family-focused adoption services with an emphasis on African-American and special needs children as measured by our key stakeholders:

- Children and families
- Employees
- Funders
- Member and peer agencies, and all levels of government

AWARDS

- Recipient of the Adoption 2002 Excellence Award given by President Clinton - 1998
- Honored as a Congressional Angel in Adoption presented by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) - 2003
- Presented with the Faith Based Recruiting Award at the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) Conference - 2004
- Honored as a Congressional Angel in Adoption presented by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) - 2005
- Recipient of the Adoption Excellence Award For Support to Adoptive Families - 2010
- Recipient of the Community Partnership Award by Mutual of America - 2011

AFFILIATIONS

- Adoption Exchange Association
- Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network
- National Black Child Development Institute
- North American Council on Adoptable Children
- United Way
- Voice for Adoption
ADOPTION RESOURCES

Adoption Resources/Recruitment and Retention: Family Recruitment and education programs to increase the number of families willing and able to adopt, foster or provide respite care. Adoption Resources also includes:

Waiting Child
Sponsored by SWAN, KDRA-TV airs a bi-monthly segment entitled Waiting Child. The segment features older children who are awaiting adoption. In 2012, seven children were featured and three update videos were aired. Two of the featured children were matched with their forever families.

Wendy’s Wonderful Kids
Since becoming a Wendy’s Wonderful Kids (WWK) grantees in 2007, TRAC has served 101 children, matching 57 children with their forever families. During 2012, 7 children were matched with supportive, loving families.

ADOPTION/FOSTER CARE SERVICES

TRAC has provided culturally sensitive support to families from pre-service training, through the homestudy process, placement and eventual finalization. TRAC is a full service adoption/foster care agency, providing:
- Family training
- Family profiles
- Matching services
- Child profiles
- Placement/Refinalization supervision services

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

TRAC’s Family Connections program focuses on educating both the parent and child to understand what has happened to them in their journey through the child welfare system. Family Connections also focuses on maintaining and restoring relationships and creating healthy families through:
- Outpatient Therapy
- Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) referred services include
  - Case Management
  - Support Group
  - Child Prep
  - Respite
  - Re-Connections
  - Services for families working toward reunification
MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS 2012

Recruitment & Retention
- Conducted 378 recruitment contacts
- Provided information/assistance to 180 African American families
- Conducted 32 information meetings with 84 families
- Hosted the Celebration of Families matching event at the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium for over 500 participants

Business Recruitment
- 52 business recruiting contacts were made

Ministry Outreach Initiative (since 1998)
- 101 churches actively collaborate with the initiative
- 314 families have been recruited

Wendy's Wonderful Kids
- Provided child specific recruiting services to 12 children
- 7 children were either matched or placed

Adoption/Foster Care Services
- 24 families have completed pre-service training
- Completed 30 family profiles
- Placed 28 children into permanent homes
- 6.5 years is the average age of a child placed during this fiscal year
- Finalized 21 adoptions
- Completed 157 child profiles

Since 1988
- 397 children have been placed
- 42 disruptions have been reported during the same span

Our Matching Department
- In 2012, served 1,031 children and families and provided 7,074 matches
- Assisted in the placement of 7,216 children since 1979
- Provided services to 5,006 families since 1979
SUCCESS STORY

Nikki was a sweet, but hurt little girl who lived in a foster home when the Wendy’s Wonderful Kids (WWK) Recruiter first met her. Nikki always maintained hope that she would go back home to her birthmother. After several visits, Nikki slowly began to trust and open up to the TRAC WWK Recruiter. She shared with her Recruiter that if her mother was not able to care for her permanently, she wanted to be with a family that “looked like her” (trans-racial).

The WWK Recruiter diligently advocated to the courts on Nikki’s behalf to be placed in a TRAC family home that she knew would be a good fit for Nikki. However, kinship care was always considered first as the primary placement resource. Nikki was sent to live with her maternal great aunt, whom she had never met. She was scared and sad, and did not feel safe in her new “home”.

Having worked so closely with Nikki, the recruiter kept in contact with the county worker. The WWK Recruiter was not optimistic about Nikki’s living arrangements and the aunt refused to allow the Recruiter to visit her.

Through the county worker, the Recruiter learned that the relationship between Nikki and her aunt was quickly deteriorating and she believed a disruption in the placement was inevitable. The WWK Recruiter continued to advocate to the courts for the TRAC family with whom she had worked so closely.

Shortly after Nikki was removed from her aunt’s home, she began visiting with the TRAC family that she was initially matched with and they immediately connected with each other. Nikki informed the WWK Recruiter of her joy and excitement and the fulfillment of a dream that she had been longing for all her life: a permanent home with a forever family.

Nikki and her new family (mom, dad, brother and dog!) will celebrate their finalization on November 17, 2012 (National Adoption Day).

CELEBRATION OF FAMILIES 2011

In August, 2011, over 110 families participated in the 14th Annual Celebration of Families at the Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium. Each year, this event is held to honor and celebrate those who share the belief that all children deserve a family.

Inside the Zoo’s Education Center, 18 adoption agencies from counties throughout Pennsylvania took part in a Matching Event, highlighting over 50 children who are waiting to be matched with their forever family. The majority of agencies reported receiving inquiries on at least one of their children; and several agencies reported numerous inquiries and highly considered several families who attended the event, based upon their first impression of the family. One family in particular was offered an interview by an agency that day on a child they inquired about – later resulting in placement of the child in the family’s home.

Throughout the day, children were entertained by DJ Kevin, craft and coloring activities, face painting by Glitter and Dot and an up-close visit with live zoo animals and reptiles. Families enjoyed a lunch of hamburgers, hot dogs, salads and cookies in the tent before heading out to enjoy the beautiful weather and the rest of the zoo.
TRAUMA INFORMED CARE
CONFERENCE & TRAC MEETINGS

Made possible through grants from Richard King Mellon Foundation and an anonymous donor, Three Rivers Adoption Council hosted the first annual Trauma Informed Care Conference in December 2011.

Dr. Karyn Purvis, Director of Texas Christian University’s Institute of Child Development, presented Healing Kids From Hard Places. Dr. Purvis presented her ground-breaking Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBR) during the two day conference. Additional workshops were presented by local leaders in child attachment and mental health as well as TRAC staff.

In the spring, TRAC held a series of four monthly Healing Kids From Hard Places trainings for adoptive parents and professionals. The trainings expanded upon the information presented during the two-day conference and provided the attendees with hands-on activities that they could use in daily situations.

In September, 2012 TRAC will host our second annual Trauma Informed Care Conference, featuring Dr. David Cross. TRAC will continue its series of TRAC meetings with a four part series in the Spring of 2013.

RETIRES

Funded by a grant from the Staunton Farm Foundation, TRAC offered three retreats to adoptive parents and their children. Because of the trauma and neglect that occurs in the lives of many adopted children, ongoing support, education and respite are paramount in building and maintaining healthy familial relationships.

TRAC weekend retreats provide families with activities and tools that they can use when they return home. The family retreat offers parents an evening of much-needed respite, while the teen retreat provides team-building and healthy relationship activities.

Overwhelmingly, the parents as well as the teens responded that one of the things that they enjoyed most about the retreats was meeting and talking with other families/kids who are “like them”.

“I liked and valued the skills I learned at the conference, but I truly treasure how this presentation disarmed my need to correct behavior and lifted up my deeper instinct to connect and nurture.”

“It was wonderful to be able to utilize Dr. Purvis’ insight on Healing Touch.”

“I thought the presenters did a great job, I would really like to see the series continue and continue to be offered to outside agencies.”

“The classes at TRAC and the suggested reading have been a great help in providing [the children] comfort and minimizing the negatives of tantrums and sadness. [Their] behavior is quite different from birth children and with TRAC’s classes it really is pretty easy to understand the situation from the child’s mindset.”

“I could relate to everyone here.”
CONTRIBUTIONS
July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

$10,001+
Anonymous
Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
Richard King Mellon Foundation

$5,000 - $10,000
Clapp Charitable and Educational Trust
Eaton Corporation
Giant Eagle Foundation
Robert and Ursula Jaeger
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Giant Eagle, Cedar Avenue
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Giant Eagle, Ligonier
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KDKA-TV
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The Wendy’s Company
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Tippins Foundation

$500 - $999
Catherine and Benjamin Bogats
Michael and Gina Brown
James and Janet Brown
Constance M Brown
Dan Cheberenich
Deacon’s Cleaning Services
First National Bank of Pennsylvania
Karen A Gordon
Glenn and Linda Griner
Elizabeth Hays
Huntington National Bank
Jordan Markisotto
MSA Charitable Foundation
Denise and Robert O’Connor
Brent and Debbie Quarles
Susan Snow
Daryland Jacqueline Wilson
Wilke & Associates, LLP
Derrick S Wilson
Shanta Zimmer and Fernando Holguin

$10 - $499
ATI Allegheny Ludlam
Larry and Cheryl Anderson
Sherry Anderson
William Andrews
Avonworth High School
Ronald Bailey
Jamal A Baraka
Joan Barden
Donna Baumgarten
Kenneth Beatty
Marcus Blum
Bohlin Cwywinski Jackson
Scott Brown
Peter and Karen Buchheit
Kathleen Butterni
Matthew Case

Kathleen Calhoun
Kathy Ceramic
John Connors
Richard Constand
Amanda Daly
Richard Daugherty
Deer Valley Homeowners Association
Sandra and John DePellegrini
Doris Dick and Sharon Geibel
Judi Diven
Mary Drugmand
James Fanning
Ken and Marianne Ferrans
Elizabeth Giordano
Eva and Arnold Engler
Russell and Christine M Felix
Matthew Geffel
Gary and Mrs. Antanette Gentile
Michael Goldstein
Frank Grzywinski
Stacy Hart
Gregory Hasenfus
Curni Hauser
Gwendolyn Henderson
Paul and Patricia Herbert
Michael and Rebekah Herman
Matthew Holland
Werner and Celeste Holt
Cynthia Homol
Aiza and Sarah Ismail
Jason and Suzanne Jack
Jae-Hoon Jones
Robert Karaba
Carole Kam
Thomas and Wendy Kastelic
Shriram Kelkar
David Kephart
Leigh Kish
Melanie Koenig
David and Beth Kovalcik
CONTRIBUTIONS
July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

$10 - $499
Nancy Krebs
Beth Lackner
David and Cristina Lagner
Patricia Lee
Robyn Lepore
Nicole Lewis
Bradley Lewis
Noah Lubowsky
James and Jennifer Lucchino
Jennifer Luft
Connie Makuch
Edward Manka
Khaliah Martin
Susan Mattay
Kristen Matthews
Carolyn Kovalchick
Stephen and Cynthia Krchnavy
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Pfizer Foundation - Matching Gifts.

Kelly Poindexter
Alvin and Jennifer Ralph
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Angela and Paul Sharp
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**FUNDING**

Three Rivers Adoption Council (TRAC) is funded by contracts through Allegheny County Department of Human Services, The Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN), private foundations, corporations and individual donations. We recognize with gratitude and appreciation our supporters who enable us to promote permanency for children.

**A Note from the Treasurer**

An audited financial report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012 is available. A copy will be provided upon request.

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**2012 Revenue**

- Statewide Adoption Network (SWAN): 52.6%
- Alegany County: 23.2%
- Fee For Service: 9.0%
- Grants & Other Donations: 7.6%
- Wendy’s Wonderful Kids: 3.4%
- Medical Billing: 1.5%
- Other: 2.7%

**2012 Expense**

- Adoption Resources: 38.4%
- Fundraising: 1.0%
- Adoption/ Foster Care Services: 31.3%
- Administrative: 14.0%
- Recruitment & Retention: 2.7%
- Family Connections: 4.2%
- Wendy’s Wonderful Kids: 4.2%
A TRIBUTE TO MY ADOPTIVE MOTHER

Mother so dear, I want you to know
You’ve taught me a lot to help me grow.
You’ve taught me what you know is right
That I have beauty, strength and might.

I didn’t come from your womb
But in your home you made room
For you to Love me day by day
To teach and raise me in aspecial way.

Through the good times and bad times, sunshine and rain
Through stubbornness, rebellion, hurting and pain,
You have always been there for me to talk to
You have given me advice and opinions too.
I love you so much that I feel for you each day.

But there will be a time when I am on my own,
When I will leave you and my happy home.
I will always remember you because there is no other
That I would be happier or prouder to call my dear mother.

Ruth Smithers-Mohan, Adult Adoptee
Written at age 12