

# A New Day

*A new day is dawning in our communities.*

*Children who would have been victims of abuse are now growing up in structured, loving homes.*

*Troubled kids who were headed toward dangerous and destructive futures are now growing into productive and disciplined adults.*

*Families fractured by stress and mental illness are now whole and healthy.*

## All because of you...



## A New Day for Bobbi

Bobbi is two weeks away from her 18th birthday. She is soft-spoken without a hint of shyness and wears a thick, cozy jacket that belies the 80-muggy-degree day. She has a beautiful voice, though singing for an audience unnerves her, and her delicate hands offer no hint of her unusual aptitude at the potter's wheel. Bobbi is proof that looks can be deceiving.

*You'd never know* that since age 3, Bobbi has bounced between so many homes, it's difficult to track. The best count suggests 14, including foster, group and treatment homes.

She has fond memories of her mother pushing her in a battery-operated but non-functioning four-wheeler for kids. She loves and fears her mom—loving the woman who gave her life while fearing becoming like her: an alcoholic edging closer to death with each drink.

She also has fond memories and feelings toward her grandparents who stepped in to parent Bobbi when her mom failed her. The relationship, though, was rife with conflict. Bobbi tried her best to do everything right, and her grandparents did the same. But in the end, both sides felt they were falling short, that neither was good enough for the other.

"People didn't like me. I was bad, a wild child. I didn't listen, became kind of a rebel, a bully. I picked on other kids. I was very depressed, but I didn't know I was. I knew I was having problems but didn't know what to do."

Eventually, Bobbi's grandparents determined a new home would be in her best interest and told her she would be moving to a foster home. That began a series of bouncing between different homes. "I have always felt out of place. It was hard for me to make friends. I was afraid I'd have to move again, or kids were just evil. You really couldn't trust them," says Bobbi, adding, "I don't know how I felt about adults."

*A new day* dawned when after several tries with different foster homes and running away from a group home in another area, Bobbi landed in Family & Children's Center's residential treatment program, an indication of desperation and last resort.

There, Bobbi was diagnosed with reactive detachment disorder, a rare, serious clinical condition that occurs when infants and very young children don't establish healthy bonds with parents or caregivers. Children with the disorder typically were abused or neglected and never learned to establish loving attachments with others, a deficit which then affects relationships throughout their lives.

With the diagnosis, Family & Children's Center established a comprehensive treatment plan, and Bobbi began receiving day treatment services while attending the center's alternative school. After about five months, Bobbi began responding to treatment and found the will within herself to be "good."

She began opening up to therapists and other center staff, and she raised her grades from Ds and Fs to straight As. "Something inside me, like a switch, flipped, and I realized I wanted to have a life."

Bobbi's determination, with help and therapy from Family & Children's Center, earned her a place in Treatment Foster Care. Now, Bobbi is attending a public school again, maintaining good grades and working toward early graduation. And she's enjoying stability and compassion in a steady home with loving parents.

*Better tomorrows* are now a reality for Bobbi. "Family & Children's Center helped me grow up and realize what's realistic and what's not. They have been support for me when other people wouldn't be there for me. They encourage me to do good things; they want good things from me and for me. They have opened possibilities and new opportunities." Bobbi says it's the first time she can remember really trusting other people in her life.

Bobbi is now preparing for a career in the military. After retiring from the military, she'd like a catering business, so she's also studying culinary arts.

"I don't know where I would be without Family & Children's Center. I know I would have no appreciation for life. I would not be as successful as I am now. It's a great place. You may want to fight them and may not want to listen to them. You may think they're against you. But the truth is they're always there to support you. They're going to try to help you, but you have to accept it."

At one time, people would have looked at Bobbi and seen a pretty typical kid, never knowing that beneath the surface was a child who desperately needed but completely lacked meaningful connections with other people, a child who needed a place to land but was constantly hovering just above solid ground, a child who needed help but wouldn't accept it.

In this regard, through Family & Children's Center, Bobbi now is at one with her reality. She finally received and accepted the help she needed, and that has changed everything — for today, for tomorrow and forever.

## 2009 Highlights

- With services continuing to expand at unprecedented rates, Family & Children's Center welcomed its 300th employee. The Center has experienced an 18% growth in programming in the last five years.
- The purchase of a new Winona services headquarters facility (the Winona Daily News building located on Franklin Street) enabled Family & Children's Center to remain a preferred provider of human services in southeastern Minnesota. Winona-based programming has quadrupled in size since 1998.
- To mark May as National Foster Care Awareness Month, local foster care youth showcased their artistic and musical talents at the La Crosse Area Foster Care Youth Advisory Council Talent Show. Youth participants were recognized by local celebrities including Mayor Matt Harter and Judge Ramona Gonzalez for their hard work and achievements.
- Hiawatha Hall, a residential group home for individuals with persistent mental illness, was added to complement Family & Children's Center's adult services continuum in Winona, Minn. Hiawatha Hall is a former program of Franciscan Skemp Healthcare.
- Family & Children's Center's Rochester Youth Night Campus program partnered with the Rochester Area YMCA to offer recreational programming to youth participants. The partnership is supported by the Olmsted County United Way.

## Family & Children's Center

Better Tomorrows Start With Us

### Mission

Family & Children's Center serves children, families and individuals with a continuum of services designed to strengthen families and promote individual well-being.

### Vision

To be a leader in the provision of human services in western Wisconsin and southeastern Minnesota: through quality, access and service.

### Values

Excellence: We are committed to providing the highest quality services to our consumers, employees and community.

Innovation: We continually strive to improve our services and operations, focusing on current and future needs.

Responsiveness: We develop services based on community needs and work collaboratively with communities and consumers to continually evaluate changing conditions and adjust our services accordingly.

Respect: We treat all people with courtesy, thoughtfulness, honesty and kindness.

Responsibility: We are accountable for our actions to ourselves, others and the communities we serve.



Family & Children's Center

Better Tomorrows Start With Us

[www.fcconline.org](http://www.fcconline.org)

### Children

- 214 children in suspected child abuse or neglect cases were interviewed in a safe, friendly and compassionate environment at *Stepping Stones*.
- 98 families (with 114 children between them) received support and education through *Healthy Families* to help end the cycle of abuse.
- 163 children and youth received *Day Treatment* to help them deal with the difficult aspects of their lives.
- 30 children were *Assessed* for emotional, mental and behavioral health challenges.
- 175 children experiencing behavioral, emotional, medical and/or physical challenges received *Respite Care*, allowing their caregivers time to pause and restore.
- 537 supervised visits were conducted, allowing children removed from their family home to visit their parents with the safety and security of *Supervised Visitation*.

### Youth

- 125 students who were failing in their community schools learned how it feels to succeed in *Alternative Education*.
- 51 children and youth with severe behavioral and emotional problems received *Residential Treatment* for around-the-clock intensive treatment.
- 99 youth lived in *Residential Youth Homes*, benefitting from 24-hour supervision, comprehensive case management and a progressive motivational system.
- 27 youth participated in *Youth Night Campus* where they received highly structured day treatment, including group and individual therapy, academic support and independent living skills training.
- 41 youth lived in *Treatment Foster Care* homes, providing them a team approach to care in a stable, loving family environment and helping them learn to trust again.
- 21 youth with multiple needs received treatment planning services and much-needed moral support from our *Coordinated Service Team*.

### Families

- 1925 clients received a broad spectrum of *Outpatient Counseling* services from highly qualified, compassionate therapists.
- 21 adults and 23 children experiencing domestic violence received support from trained, experienced advocates in finding shelter, long-term support, community and legal resources from our *Domestic Abuse Project*.
- 49 individuals in mental health crises received *Emergency Mental Health Services*, including immediate assessment and crisis/response plans.
- 207 adults suffering serious and persistent mental illness were able to live more independently in their homes and communities through the *Community Support Program*.
- 67 adults living with mental illness received personalized, intensive residential treatment at *Hiawatha Hall*.
- 87 families found hope and health through *Intensive In-Home Counseling* designed to strengthen families in their own environment.

### Communities

- 3,618 individuals and families found Better Tomorrows through Family & Children's Center's continuum of care.
- 285 employees have enjoyed meaningful employment at Family & Children's Center with jobs that strengthen individuals, families and communities.
- 6,844 volunteer hours valued at more than \$117,000 were donated to bring a new day to the region.



