

Annual Report 2024

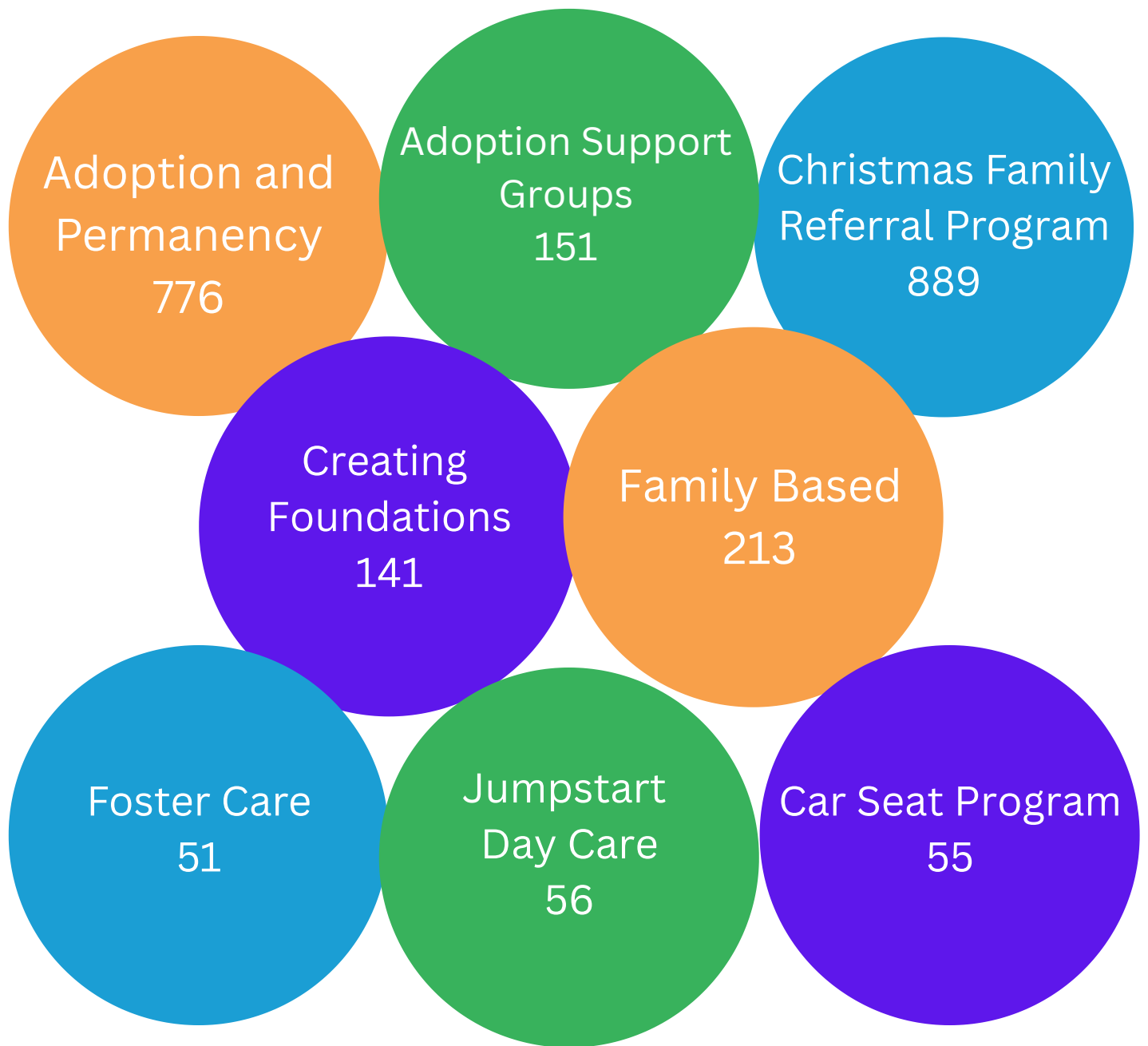


Children's Aid Society of Mercer County
350 West Market Street
Mercer, PA 16137
724-662-4730
www.casmercerc.org



Children's Aid Society of Mercer County (CAS) is a private, non-profit, 501(c)(3) multi-service agency whose programs are designed to change the lives of children and families for the better.

Through contracts, agreements, and partnerships, with several other agencies and organizations, the staff of CAS provided services to 2,332 individuals in 2024:



CAS holds licenses through the Department of Human Services for the following:

Adoption
Child Day Care
Foster Care
Mental Health and Substance Abuse
Administration of Private and Children & Youth Services

Funding Sources

CAS received funding for its programs from various sources including but not limited to the following:

- Carelton
- Keystone Stars
- Community Foundation
- Budd Trust
- Landis Trust
- Fidelity Charitable
- Deitz Family Trust
- Community/various donors
- Fee For Service
- Fundraisers
- Mercer County Behavioral Health Commission
- PA County Contracts
- CCIS
- Lindsay Trust
- PNC Charitable Trust
- Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network
- Donations
- Grants

73% of CAS funding was from SWAN, county contracts, and programs funded by Medicaid.

Revenue in 2024:

\$2,095,179.92

The Board of Directors and Staff would like to thank all the donors who have generously given to our programs throughout the year. All monetary donations and donations of food, clothing, toys, books, etc. throughout the year have made it possible for our programs to provide extra services to the children and families with whom we work. The yearly outpouring of gifts and donations during the Christmas holidays enabled CAS to provide a very happy holiday for 889 children in Mercer County. So many wonderful organizations, companies, churches, and individuals have made it possible for our programs to meet the needs of our consumers and “give a little extra” when needed.

CAS is a Member/Affiliate of:

- Carelon
- Keystone Stars
- Mercer Chamber of Commerce
- Grove City Area Chamber of Commerce
- Greenville Area Chamber of Commerce
- Shenango Valley Area Chamber of Commerce
- The North American Council on Adoptable Children (NACAC)
- Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network (SWAN)
- The Human Services Council of Mercer County
- The Pennsylvania Council of Children Youth and Family Services (PCCYFS)
- The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services
- PA Association of Non-Profit Organizations (PANO)
- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
- PA Childcare Association (PACCA)
- Manufacturers and Business Association

Board of Directors in 2024:

Mr. John Campbell, President
Mrs. Becky May, Vice President
Mr. Dave Reimold, Second Vice President
Mr. Norm Swiger
Mrs. Ann Stranahan
Dr. Chelsea Bombatch
Mr. John Harper
Hon. Thomas Dobson
Mr. David Reimold
Mrs. Emily Palmer
Mrs. Kayla Taylor
Mr. Jake Rickert

Ms. Roberts Miller-Budd Trust Representative



*Annual Board Member
and Staff Luncheon*



Administration

Heather Alt-Executive Director
Matt Hazi-Human Resource Director
Vicki Mulligan and Angelia Sherman-Fiscal Director
Patti Ryder-Fiscal Consultant
Chelsea Bailey-Public Relations Director
Joe Macri-Maintenance
Danielle Merenick-Cleaning



Mission Statement

Children's Aid Society is dedicated to the overall well-being of children and families.

Vision Statement

Children's Aid Society is committed to supporting children and strengthening families and communities.

Jumpstart Day Care

Dottie Quillen-Daycare Director
Cindy Kalkbrenner-Group Supervisor
Susan Adams-Assistant Group Supervisor
Karissa Armour-Assistant Group Supervisor
Vaughn Barley-Assistant Group Supervisor
Kayla Beers-Assistant Group Supervisor
Darcy Branca-Assistant Group Supervisor
Katherine Chesters-Assistant Group Supervisor
Arianna Cook-Assistant Group Supervisor
Isabella Eaton-Assistant Group Supervisor
Destiny Hubbard-Assistant Group Supervisor
Anneka Rudge-Assistant Group Supervisor
Terrie Seidel-Assistant Group Supervisor
Vickie Styers-Assistant Group Supervisor



Jumpstart Day Care focuses on the age appropriate skills while aiding in the development of self-control, self-esteem, and independence. Our early learning program also encourages sensory awareness, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, communication skills, listening skills, cognitive skills, and learning sign language. We are a Level Four Keystone Stars Daycare.

"My son, who is now four years old, has attended Jump Start Day Care since he was three months old. We absolutely love Jump Start Daycare and the amazing teachers. I could not imagine my son going anywhere else. He loves to go to daycare as he feels safe and loved by all of the teachers. The teachers are compassionate, nurturing, and understanding. My son is always excited to tell me the fun things he does or what he learns about each day. For example, he loved coming home to show me his new yoga moves. We are forever grateful for Jump Start Daycare." -Day Care Parent

Adoption and Permanency Department

Ashley Eck-Adoption and Permanency Director
Meisha Alexander-Foster Care Specialist
Jacquelyn Basinger-Permanency Specialist
Lauren Belin-Mentoring Specialist
Nate Best-Permanency Specialist
Jessica Bonetti-Permanency Specialist
Leah Christy-Permanency Supervisor
Katelyn Chiu-Permanency Specialist
Kayla Emery-Permanency Specialist
Chardenee Freeman-Permanency Specialist
Alyssa Hile-Permanency Specialist
Kinsey Masotto-Permanency Specialist
Victoria Paradise-Permanency Specialist
Kristi Pearsall-Permanency Specialist
Angela Pickens-Foster Care Specialist
Chelsea Porter-Permanency Specialist
Cari Prezioso-Mentoring Specialist
Mackenzie Richards-Permanency Specialist
Katrina Rueberger-SWAN Clerical
Justin Townsend-Permanency Supervisor
Ashley Uiselt-Permanency Supervisor



Our Adoption and Permanency Department is comprised of not only adoption services, but also foster care and mentoring.

“Thank you so much for helping me create memories that I can look back at.”
Child who received Child Prep Services

Adoption Services

Our adoption program functions as a full-service adoption agency. Permanent homes for children are provided, and comprehensive adoption services are offered to all participants of the adoption process. The program offers adoption groups, adoptive parent training, adoptive family profiles, birth parent and adoptee searches, birth parent counseling advocacy, international agency clients, networking, placement services, post- placement supervision, USCIS assistance, and post finalization services for adoptive families.

“I’ve been with the Shaffers over four years and today is the big day that I finally got adopted officially. I love this family a lot. They support me through everything I do and guided me to be the person I am today. I wouldn’t have made it this far without ya’ll. I am very happy to be a part of this family.” -J



“I have learned so much from this group and have gained a lot of support I really needed.” -Parent who attends Support Group

“My worker has been very motivating to me. She has been the best.” -Child receiveing Child Specific Recruitment Services

Foster Care Services

Being a foster parent may seem like an intimidating title, but it's not. Children need parents, no matter what they've been through and where they come from. Foster parents provide for children that can no longer be in their homes and are placed in the custody of Children and Youth Services. There are over 14,000 kids in foster care in Pennsylvania. Anyone can be a foster parent, as long as they are at least 21 years old, have their clearances and pass a medical examination. The children need care, not a perfect house or family situation. They just need a place to feel safe and people that care about them. You can be that person. You can be the difference.



"My words of wisdom to anyone thinking about becoming a foster parent is to go all in. You will never regret the investment of time, love, and compassion you have sown into the life of a child."
-Sarah Dumas

"Children's Aid Society's foster care program is nothing short of wonderful. The support they offer to you as a family, but also to the child, is unmatched." -CAS Foster Parent

Creating Foundations Mentoring Program

When children in Pennsylvania's foster care system turn 18, they age out of the system. This means they are released to face the world on their own, only now they are viewed as adults. This transition is difficult for anyone, especially those who do not have a family to lean on for support. Bills, jobs, responsibilities – they all add up and can be overwhelming for someone who has not experienced them before. This is where our mentors come in. When everything else runs out, we have a program that helps fill that void and bridge that gap.

Our mentoring program is designed so mentors can meet the youth where they are and help them get where they need to be, while serving as a support system. Whether it is establishing a relationship with a 14 year-old, helping an 18 year-old apply for college, or helping a 23 year-old apply for a job, mentors are needed to prepare the youth for what lies ahead as they transition to adulthood. This program gives young people the role model they may never get otherwise. It helps them with skills, but at the core, it guarantees that they will always have someone that cares about them and that they are not alone.



Mentee with her mentor



Annual Mentoring Luncheon

"You are the person I have been dreaming of." -Mentee meeting her Mentor for the first time.

Family Based

Becky Rodondi-Family Based Director
Susan Bordonaro-Mental Health Professional
Bethany Collins-Mental Health Worker
Charann Hughes-Mental Health Professional
Jay-Kayla Samuels-Mental Health Worker



These services are designed to work with the whole family to reduce the need for psychiatric hospitalization, enhance parenting skills that will enable parents to confidently care for their children in the home, stabilize the home environment and keep the family together, and empower families to maintain progress independent of service providers. FBMHS are provided at no cost to the families who participate.

"I absolutely love how the whole family is involved in the process because effective communication family wide is vital."-Family Based client

Fundraising



Our First 5K was a success



Ice Cream Social on the Square



Comedy Show Fundraiser



22nd Annual Golf Outing

Collaboration

One of our biggest collaborations is with the Dalton Bacco Living the Dream Fund. Frank and Kerri Bacco tragically lost their son in May 2017.

He spent several years of his young life in foster care before being adopted by the Bacco Family. After he passed, his parents started the Dalton Bacco Living the Dream Fund. It is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization that supports children in foster care. Not only do they mentor many youth in our mentoring program, they take several children from our programs Christmas shopping at the local Outlet Mall. Kerri works with them to get the most for their dollar. Several of the kids get new shoes, something they don't often get! We are lucky to have the Dalton Bacco Living the Dream Fund supporting our children!



You can learn more about this amazing organization and everything they do for children in foster care on their Facebook page.

Community Outreach



Keystone Safari Small Business Days



Trunk or Treat at the Lakes at Jefferson



Strawberry Days

Christmas



Christmas time is our busiest time of the year because of our Christmas Referral Program. Thanks to the amazing community that we are so lucky to be a part of, we were able to provide some Christmas gifts to almost 900 children this year. It was one of our biggest years yet. We had many people take children's names to purchase for. We also had a large number of individuals purchase items off our Amazon wishlist for children. We would not be able to do this year after year without the support of local businesses and everyone in the community who comes together to make sure these children get Christmas gifts.

Director's Message

Children's Aid Society is celebrating 136 years of uninterrupted services this year. Various aspects of CAS have changed over the years. Many years ago, we were a group home, and now we focus on services serving the surrounding communities. We have seen staff and Executive Directors come and go. Clients have grown and moved on from our services. Throughout all these changes, we have maintained our goal of providing quality services to families and children in the community.

Children's Aid Society is lucky to have some of the most dedicated and hardworking staff. Our employees go above and beyond to meet the needs of the clients with whom they work. They pour their hearts and souls into their work and advocacy. Several children in daycare have learned the skills they will need to succeed in Kindergarten in the fall. The families who work with our Family Based teams were able to connect and learn how to best cope in stressful situations while supporting each other. Many children found their forever families in our Adoption Program, while still many others made a lifelong connection in our Mentoring Program. Several children were provided safe and loving homes in our Foster Care Program until they were able to return to their birth family.

The support we have received from the community continues to be a huge blessing year after year. Each year we continue to serve more and more people. We received several donations and grants this year. Because of these and the many other donors in the community, we have been able to continue providing quality services. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Heather Alt

Executive Director