

---

## Report from the Executive Director

---

Is the glass half full or half empty? That question came to mind quite a few times during this last fiscal year, and being a generally optimistic organization, board, management, and staff chose the half full perspective – most of the time. It is a challenge to find opportunity when the environment seems threatening.

It helps, of course, if circumstances can be viewed and acted on as if they are situations, not crises. Organizations need to have clear-thinking leaders to negotiate difficult times. Family Connections is not the sort of enterprise that is impacted by economic recession. It is, however, an organization that is greatly impacted by a decrease in the number of residents it serves in its group home. A decrease in referrals and admissions for the Brooke Place residential program meant that Family Connections' board and executive staff had to find answers to difficult questions and plan accordingly.



2010-2011 BOD Officers: Jennifer Kirkbride, Vice-President; Elaine Cipoletti, Treasurer; Chris Byers, President; Peg Cartus, Secretary

The board of directors addressed each concern with the gravity it deserved and challenged themselves and agency management to rethink 'business as usual', further develop the marketing plan, and nurture relationships with current referral sources while developing new resources.

In January 2011, the clinic's contract therapist decided she would like to work more hours for Family Connections. It was a happy coincidence that this occurred at a time when the group home population was at its lowest point. Many of this therapist's clients followed her to Family Connections from her former employer and the clinic referrals swelled with referrals from physicians. Again, the need to build and nurture relationships was borne out.

While there was an upswing in referrals, they were still insufficient to support a full-time counselor as an employee. In order to sustain clinic operations over the long term, it was decided to use contract counselors. This decision necessitated a lay off, something Family Connections has rarely done in its 35 years.

In May, Family Connections also entered into a shared lease agreement with Dr. Richard Ajayi of Cognitive Behavioral Health that allows him to use our clinic offices several evenings each week to see clients. This, in turn, has meant more referrals although the clients are free to receive counseling services anywhere.

Family Connections remains active in the West Virginia Child Care Association (WVCCA), serving on the agency support and public affairs

committees, as well as participation on the executive committee. Through WVCCA, Family Connections was represented at the annual conference for probation officers and social workers. The agency also was active at WVCCA's fall conference on Prevention Strategies for Kids at Risk. It was at that conference that Family Connections was able to publicly recognize the valuable contributions of administrative assistant Linda Pratt as the WVCCA Support Staff for 2010 and Cathy Nogay, a lawyer in our community working tirelessly to represent the best interests of abused children.



Linda Pratt at WVCCA Awards Luncheon

Family Connections' partnership with WVU's school of Landscape Architecture concluded with a spectacular book filled with student's renderings of what the Brooke Place property *could* look like. From that book, two beautifully drawn perspectives of the property emerged and were mounted for display and fund raising purposes.

More friends of Family Connections have emerged in the community as the agency became more active with the Weirton Chamber of Commerce. The newsletter has also been a benefit to the agency, educating the public about the

offered services, and the public responded with generous donations from the wish list. Family Connections honored these community friends with an open house in September 2010.



Rosa LaRosa, Brooke Place Director, with Cathy Nogay, 2010 Award Recipient

Family Connections values the partnerships with the Bureau of Children and Families on initiatives that will strengthen services this vulnerable population. We have representation on a number of committees and subcommittees including Building Bridges, Licensing Regulation Review, Service Delivery, Family Ways Community Collaborative, Region I Summit, Family Resource Network, and the Region I Clinical Review Team.

Family Connections had licensing reviews for the outpatient clinic and Brooke Place. Requirements for continued licenses were met at both sites.

As always, we remain optimistic about our future.



---

## Report from the Fiscal Director

---

The first half of fiscal year saw a downward trend in the financial situation of the agency due to a low census at Brooke Place. Happily, in the second half of the year the agency once again began moving in a positive direction.

We renewed our lease of the clinic site at the Weirton Medical Center office building for another two years with no increase in the rent. Family Connections was very fortunate to have Tina Stewart join as a full time contract therapist in January. After working with Family Connections by seeing the residents of the group home, Dr. Richard Ajayi has entered into sharing the cost of office space for his newly formed practice. With the increased activity at the office, the clinic site is becoming able to support itself.

Twenty eight short term financial objectives were developed for the year and 23 were met (82%). Focus continues to be on increasing public awareness of the agency through the newsletters, solicitation letters and newspaper articles. Also continued were goals related to increasing revenue for the agency.

The board approved the budget for the next fiscal year, which saw the return of the 3% cost of living increase for all employees. Management team has decided to remove the merit bonus from the evaluation process and bonuses will continue, but will be reconfigured, with the possibility of being based upon years of service with the

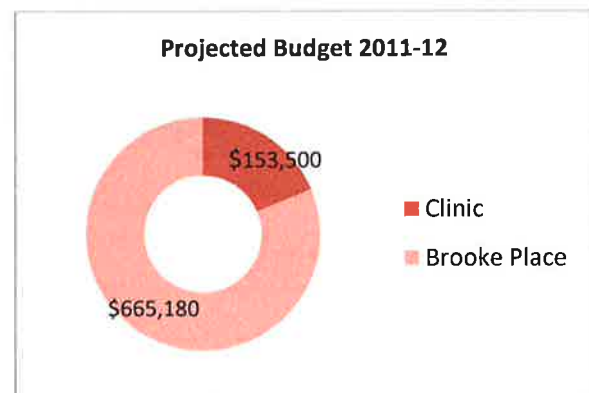
organization. Employees' contribution for health care benefits remained unchanged for another year.

After several years with Family Connections as a valued employee, the part-time maintenance worker resigned. We were able to contract with the gentleman who has worked with Family Connections by doing snow removal at the group home.

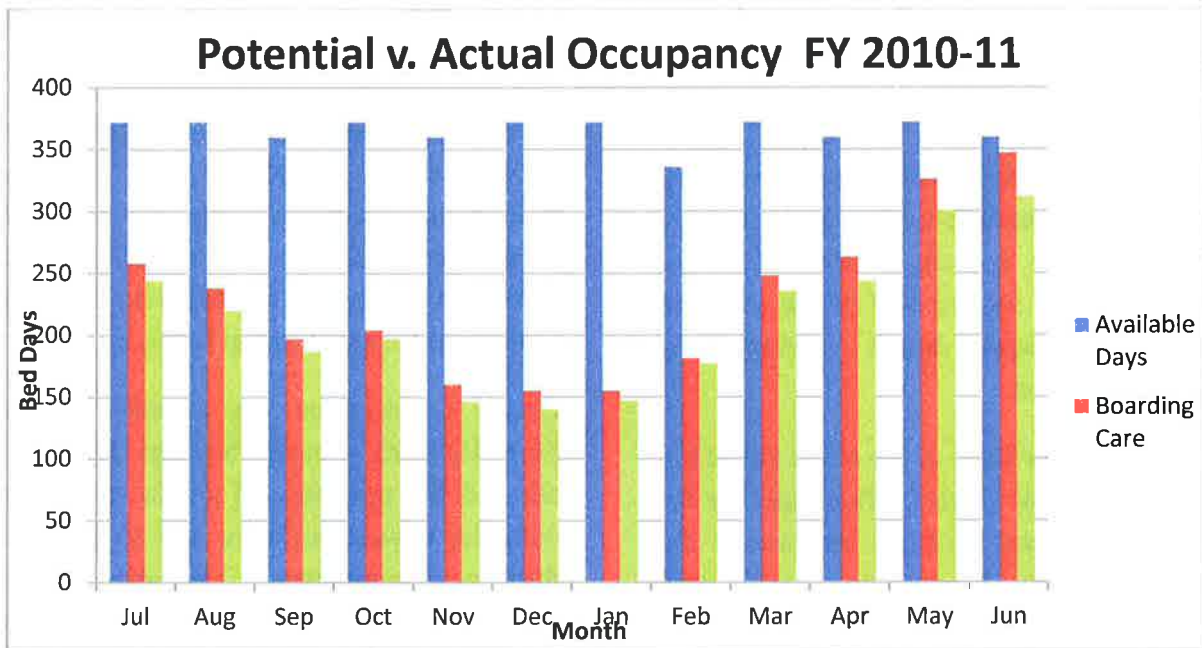
Family Connections was awarded a grant from Hancock County Savings Bank that allowed for updating all of the computers with the newest software and to purchase three new computers. The software was obtained through Tech Soup which allows non-profits to purchase software and hardware at greatly reduced costs.

Another milestone was reached, as it was 10 years ago that ground was broken for the new group home on Tent Church Road! New carpeting throughout the group home was replaced and it is hopeful that we will be updating the bathroom vanities within the next year.

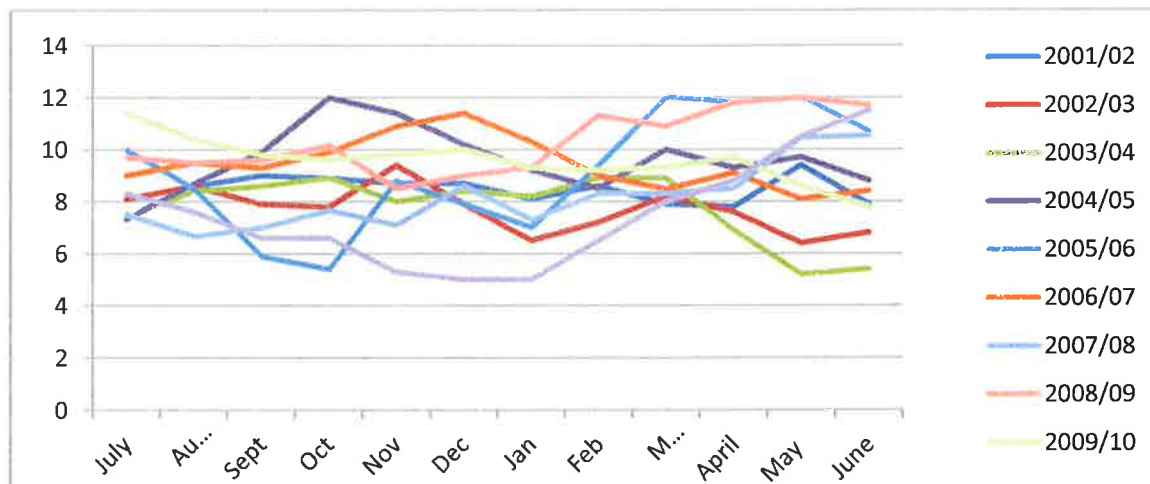
As we entered into our 35<sup>th</sup> year as a non-profit organization, we are excited about the agency's ability to remain fiscally responsible.



# Brooke Place



**Above:** The potential occupancy of the group home is measured in “bed days”, i.e., the number of days in the month multiplied by the bed capacity of the group home, in this case 12. Boarding care represents the number of beds days that were actually invoiced to the Bureau of Children and Families, in other words, the number of days that beds were actually occupied by residents. Medicaid is the number of treatment days that were invoiced to the Bureau of Medical Services. In general, the boarding care and treatment days will be close, but never equal, because treatment days are not counted when residents are on home visits or in the hospital. As the chart indicates, June was the month with the highest population. (Last year it was July, 2 years before that it was May; in 06-07 it was Dec.) The population declined steadily from July through December, reached a record low in December and January, and then began to climb. It remains unclear why the occupancy dipped. Some changes in marketing strategies may have helped with the rise, but that is also unclear. The target Brooke Place is still shooting for is at least 92% occupancy for the year. **Below:** Occupancy over a decade. New facility opened June 2002. Prior bed space was 9.





---

## Report from the Brooke Place Director

---

While the residents of Brooke Place are working on their own goals, they are often focused on themselves. Certainly, this is to be expected. It is our hope; however, that they also learn the value of giving to others. Brooke Place residents are encouraged to volunteer and to give back to the community during their stay in the program. They are also encouraged to continue the giving in their own communities when they leave our facility. We hope they will learn more about themselves and build stronger values and understanding of the world around them in the process. As such, the residents of Brooke Place have volunteered at the local animal shelter, a number of local churches and they have spent time at a nursing home, right up the road.



In the year 2010-2011, Brooke Place faced some trying times as the census dipped. In the midst of difficulties, one of the values we try to instill in the residents: “don’t live in the negative.” It would certainly be easy to focus on the negatives, but rather we tried to accentuate the

positives. In the process of teaching the residents the value of giving, we wanted to keep in mind that we are here to give something back to them. The girls come first, and we are charged with modeling the behavior we expect from them. We worked to provide the best care possible to the residents, we worked to increase marketing and referrals and we worked to manage our anxiety so it did not become contagious. Wouldn’t you know it, somewhere in the middle of the keeping the focus on what was important; we managed to have an upswing in census. Although the girls had no knowledge of what was going on behind the scenes, they helped “keep us keepin’ on.”

While giving to others, the girls are also reminded to take care of themselves. They spend a great deal of time working. Working at school, working on their goals, working at work... Sometimes girls just want to have fun, too. Over the past year, the residents of Brooke Place took part in going horseback riding and swimming. They took trips to Kennywood and to the water park. Events like these are just plain fun, but also help the girls to learn new skills, build relationships with their peers and staff members and strengthen their social skills. It also helps them to understand managing finances. They organized a car wash and a bake sale to help fund an extra special trip to Cedar Point.



Once again, Family Connections, hosted gala event; “There’s No Place Like Home” to raise funds for the residents of Brooke Place.

Like last year’s event, this year’s dance was a success. The event garnered a great deal of support from the community and from local businesses. Despite the difficult financial times that we are all facing, community members turned out to show their support to the agency. The event went a long way toward strengthening Family Connections’ relationship with the community and in providing needed support for Brooke Place and its residents.



Speaking of; “There’s No Place Like Home,” the idea of a girl’s journey to get home, whatever or wherever home may be for her, is easily visualized as a journey down the yellow brick road. A few years ago, we adopted the beloved story of “the Wizard of Oz” to help the residents visualize their journey in completing the program and building for their future. The first encounter in her journey is the adjustment to coming to Brooke Place and leaving the tornado of turmoil in her home county. At the next bend in the road – an encounter with a scarecrow – the residents are encouraged to use their brains to make better decisions. Next, the girls are asked to use their hearts. They learn to show

compassion by helping self and others. Then, they focus on their inner courage and strength. They are no longer afraid of life’s challenges. At the end of the journey the girls discover what we knew all along: they always had the power to return home (or foster home or independent living), but they had to learn it themselves.

The journey is an important part of the program at Brooke Place and our efforts to commemorate residents who have completed this journey with an honor garden is moving right along. The WVU landscape architecture department has provided us with their final draft of the Brooke Place site design and the next step is funding. Our Fund Development Committee is working hard to make this dream a reality.



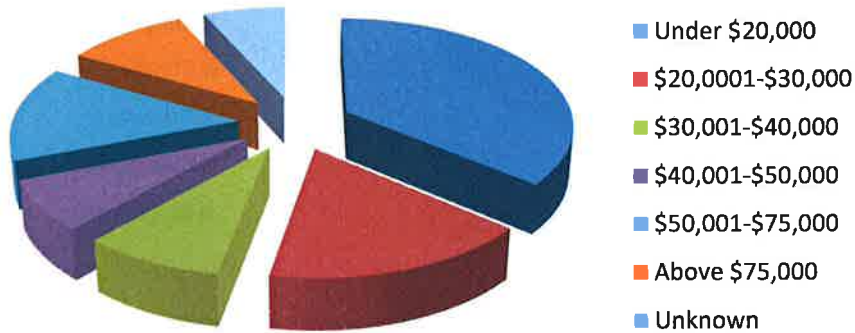
This year, we chose to reflect the importance of the resident’s journey in a new logo for Brooke Place. The new logo represents both the residents’ journey as well as reminding everyone to “Don’t Stop Believing.”



## Outpatient Clinic

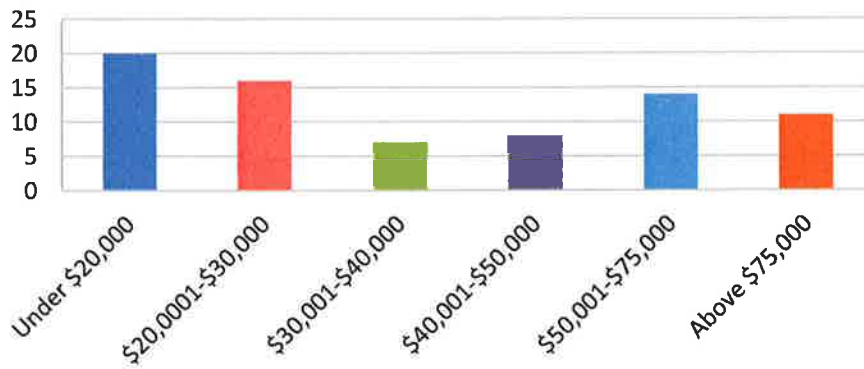
The clinic received 336 referrals in 2010-2011 (a 189% increase over last year) and opened 240 charts (compared to 124 in 2009-10). There was a 30% withdrawn/no show for first time clients, which is similar to the previous year. It is a big first step for a client to call into the clinic with concerns, and often there is sense of relief in just stating the problem aloud. This contributes to the 1/3 with-

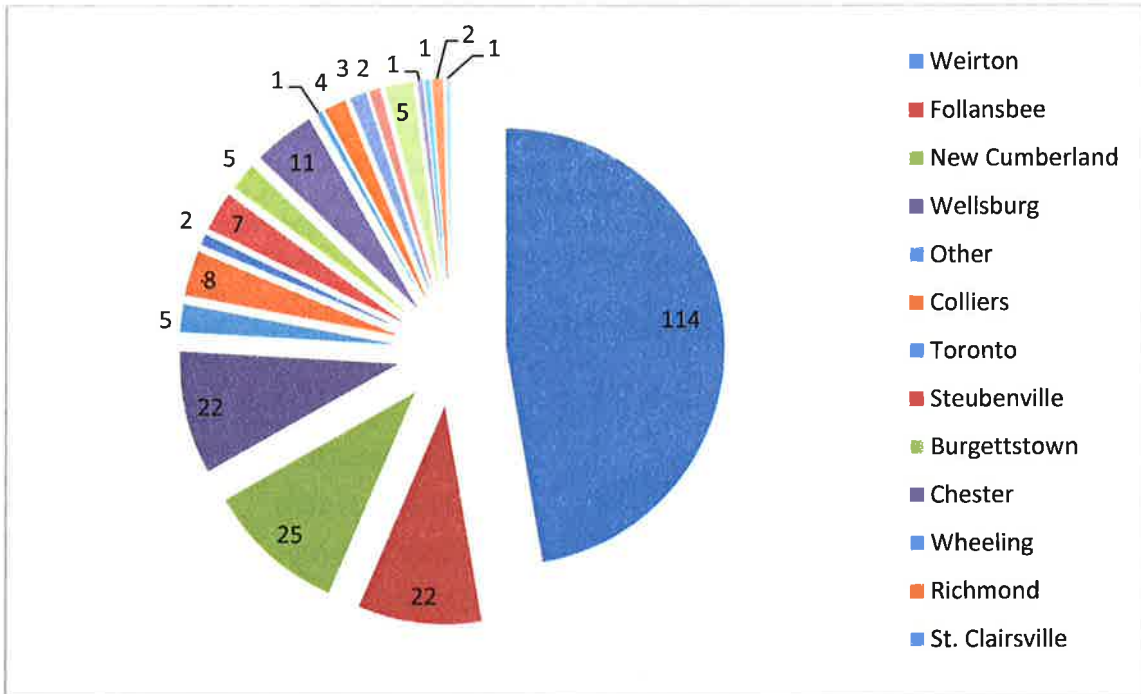
### 2010-2011 Family Income



drawal rate. One stressor impacting many families is financial. As shown in the chart on the left, more than half of clients seeking help are also trying to manage on a limited income that requires using community and family resources. The chart below shows the number of dependents in families at various income levels. The 2009 poverty threshold for a family of 4 is \$21,832. Poverty guidelines are often set 1 ½ times that figure.

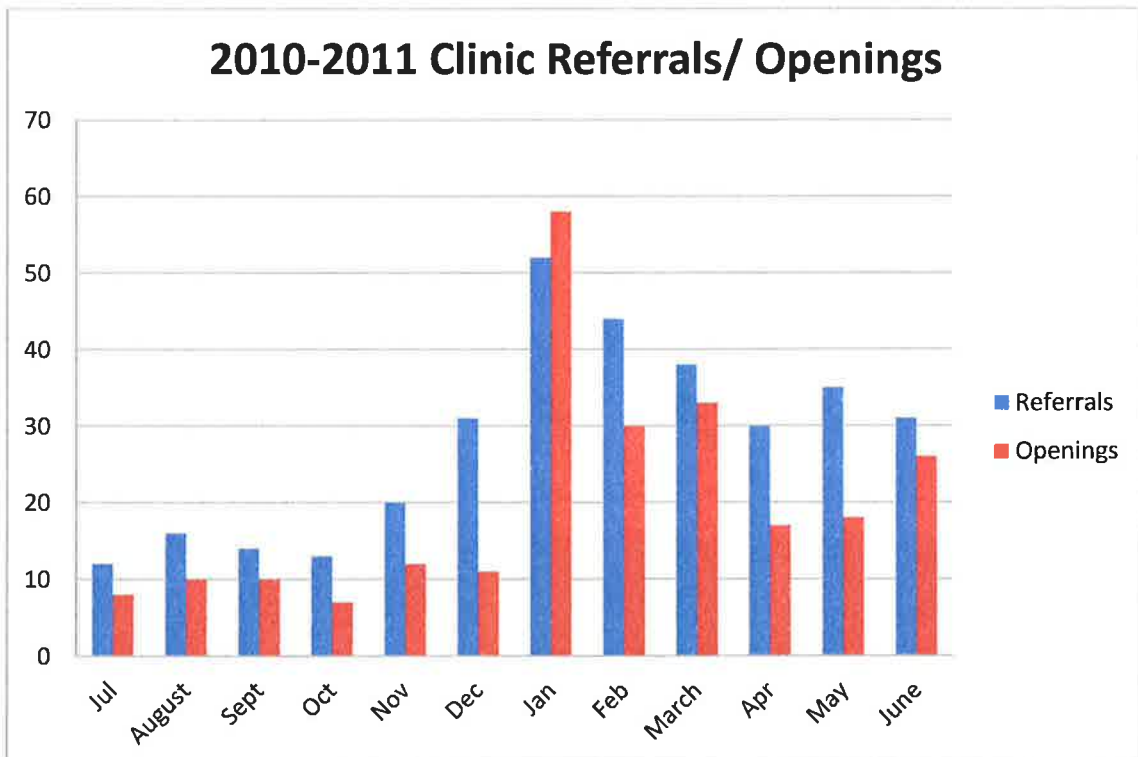
### 2010-2011 Snapshot of Income and Families with 4 or more Dependents





**Above:** This year 114 out of 240 clients at the clinic come from Weirton (47.5%). Referrals from Brooke and Hancock Counties outside of Weirton account for almost 37%. Referrals from Ohio (state) account for 11.6%. Because the clinic does not accept the Ohio medical card, these clients all carry private insurance.

**Below:** The referral increase in January 2011 is the result of a contract therapist choosing to increase the number of hours she works at the clinic. Many clients chose to follow her to Family Connections when she left her former place of employment. Referrals dropped after the initial surge and then held steady at 30+.





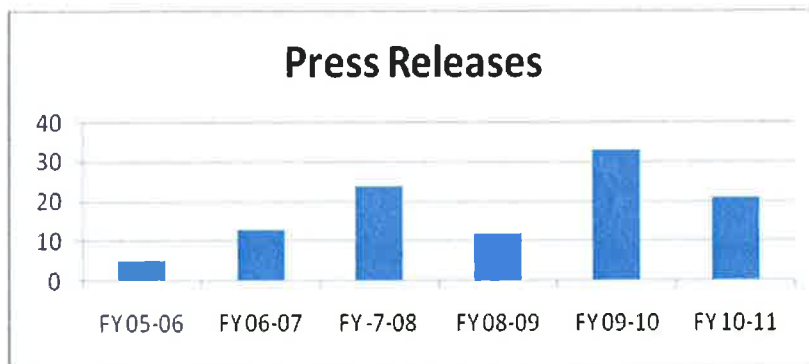
# Fund Development

## I. 2010-2011 FUND DEVELOPMENT GOALS

**Goal 1: As both programs of the organization are geographically situated in Brooke County, continue to make more inroads into Brooke County (community organizations, solicitations, etc.).**

Comment:

This goal was partially met. Family Connections joined the Wellsburg Chamber of Commerce. Agency representatives need to further connect by attending meetings, business after hours, and supporting other Chamber events. Weirton Chamber of Commerce activities are more regularly attended. An ad was placed for Follansbee Community Days. The executive director and Brooke Place director spoke at various Brooke County community functions, some of which resulted in donations. Family



Connections is now a member of Top of WV. Local Brooke County newspapers published 21 press releases.

**Goal 2: Market the agency in new arenas.**

Comment:

This goal was partially met. The organization secured the services of a professional graphics artist and marketing professional who developed a new brochure for Brooke Place. The strategies of this goal were to meld the organization's overall marketing plan with the fund development annual plan. However, an overall marketing plan was not developed during this fiscal year, and the marketing professional who may have introduced Family Connections to untapped resources was not fully utilized.

Family Connections carried its information board to conferences, job fairs, and training events, as well as Ladies Day at the (Weirton) Chamber. An Open House was held in September at Brooke Place, and Family Connections joined the Top of West Virginia.

The organization was approved for continued participation in the WV Development Office's Neighborhood Investment Program (NIP). We used our ability to offer tax credits in return for \$500 and up donations to market our organization and get some PR through newspaper articles and newsletter articles. We completed our second year of participation and have re-applied for this coming fiscal year.

**Goal 3: Pay ongoing attention to evaluating goals, solicitation strategies, and scheduling on the fund development calendar.**

Comment:

This goal was met. Monthly meetings contained a review of the calendar with goals and strategies receiving discussion and revision as necessary.

**Goal 4: Increase contact with local and state politicians.**



Comment:

This goal was met. Open house and dance was attended by a politician from the northern panhandle and contact was made with another via monthly breakfasts sponsored by the Weirton Chamber of commerce.

The executive director stayed in touch with congressmen and senators regarding children's issues while the fiscal director met with area representatives while in Charleston. The organization also kept in contact with politicians via WVCCA advocacy/marketing efforts.

Even though this goal was met, it is being continued for the 11-12 time period as it remains important at all times. Establishing a relationship with the Brooke County Commission is a particular strategy.

**Goal 5: Continue board development to foster recognition of their active role in the community as a Family Connections board member.**

Comment:

This goal was partially met. The board discussed receiving additional information about fund development, marketing, and fiduciary responsibility, by inviting a community professional to attend a board meeting. This will tentatively be carried out in FY 11-12.

The solicitation strategies for this particular goal...attending chamber breakfasts and after hours events; contacting legislature and senate via phone calls, letters, and visits; and recruiting new board members with more of an eye toward business/fiduciary/community involvement skills will remain as strategies for 2011-2012.

**Goal 6: Increase utilization of grant applications, knowing that projects with planning and budgets need to be "in the hopper."**

Comment:

This goal was not met. The particular solicitation strategies of utilizing a local university's grant information database, and re-visiting past grant applications, were not employed. However, our energies were and are directed toward preparations for further development of the Brooke Place property, which is the organization's primary project. WVU's Landscape Architecture Department students developed and produced, with joint collaboration, a site design for the Brooke Place property that will incorporate

transformation of the unused portions into walk paths, nature areas, water features, and areas for environmental education. Related efforts:

- Submission of a grant application to the Northern Panhandle Resource, Conservation and Development Council (NPRC&D), requesting \$2,000 for outdoor benches. This application is pending. We were considered by the board for receipt of their technical assistance for the project but another initiative was chosen.
- Submitting a request to the WV Landscapers' Association to request their "adoption" of the landscaping project. We assume our request was rejected but have never received formal notification.

Other efforts:

Family Connections is a member of Project Sharing, a program of NPRC&D. The organization is able to avail itself of retail merchant donations to this project.

Hancock County Bank Charitable Foundation awarded \$2,000 to assist with computer technology needs.

Family Connections joined Tech Soup for receipt of computer software in return for a minimal fee. We received \$7200 worth of Microsoft software for \$310.

We received WV State Tax credits via the Neighborhood Investment Program for the 2010-2011 fiscal year and have re-applied for the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

We continue to participate in the Kroger Rewards Program.



**Goal 7: Begin to develop the “packaged product” for development of Brooke Place’s property.**

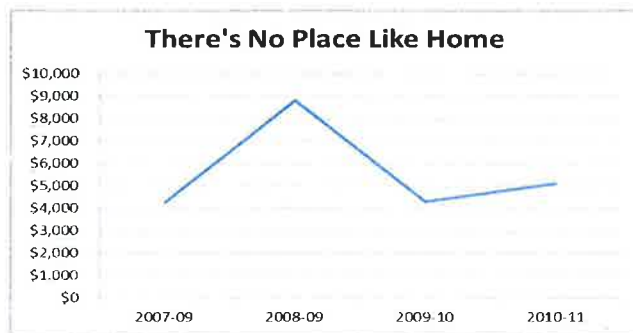
Comment:

This goal is partially met. The strategies were to determine the site design which was accomplished; determine costs, which is underway; and, determine which phase will kick off the project. This is yet to be determined.

As the plan proceeds, a cost estimate will be secured to assign costs of further development of the design into its practical application, locating a company to do the work, planning workable stages, finding suitable donors, and securing funds to do the work. Securing initial cost estimates is underway. Once more concrete information is secured, and a plan is in place, grant applications will be submitted.



## II. ANNUAL FUNDRAISING EVENT: "THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME"



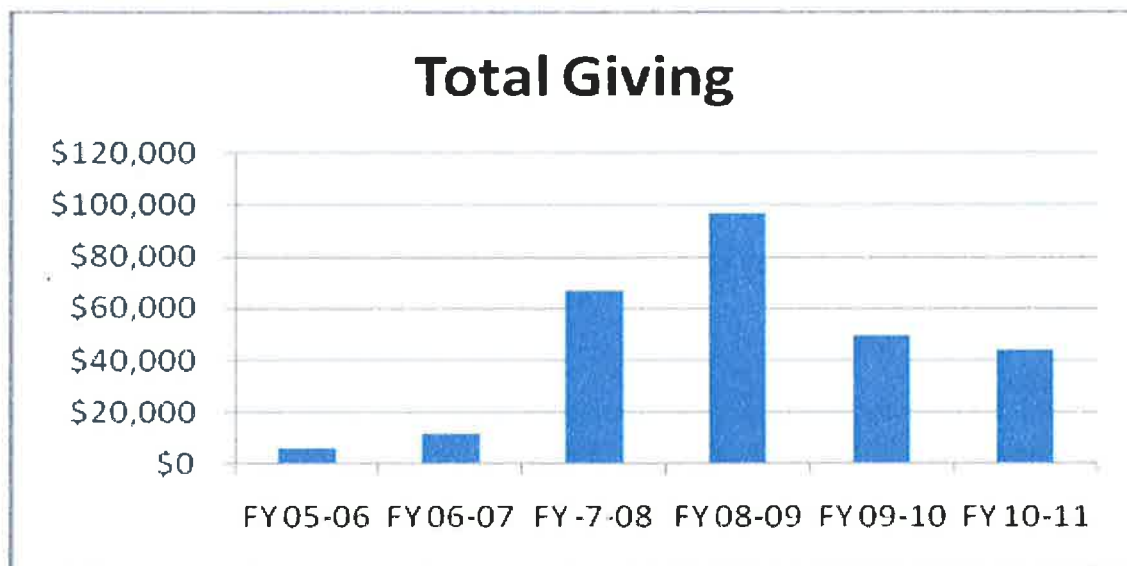
The event commemorated Family Connections' 35 years of service to children and families. Levels of giving were established for this year's event, which were Ruby (\$1,000 and above); Emerald (\$500 to \$999); Silver (\$250 to \$499) and Yellow Brick Road (\$100 to \$249). Sponsorship levels included tickets to the dance and advertising of the business, according to the specific level given.

## III. DONATION REPORT

**Cash:** \$35,762.25  
**In Kind:** 8,432.34  
**Total:** \$44,194.50

The continued success of "There's No Place Like Home" is due to donations, both in time and talent, of local individuals, community businesses and organizations.

\*\$16,280.00 represents the memorial and honor giving portion from 26 donors.



## III. CONCLUSION

The goals of Fund Development Committee are:

1. Improve the awareness of Family Connections in the community
2. Supplement operating income.
3. Connect with community members who desire to give something back to the community.



Family Connections continues to build and nurture awareness of its presence and its services in the local and statewide community. The fund development committee sets this as a priority goal, as without the promotion of education of and advocacy for children's residential services and child and adult mental health services, the organization's place in the community and state will be unrecognized. Financial support for services and improvements to the facility will thus be more difficult to obtain than it already is. Operating income was indeed supplemented, not only by cash donations, but perhaps more so by over \$8,400 in in-kind materials, many of which are "wish list" items published in "The Connection," the organization's newsletter.

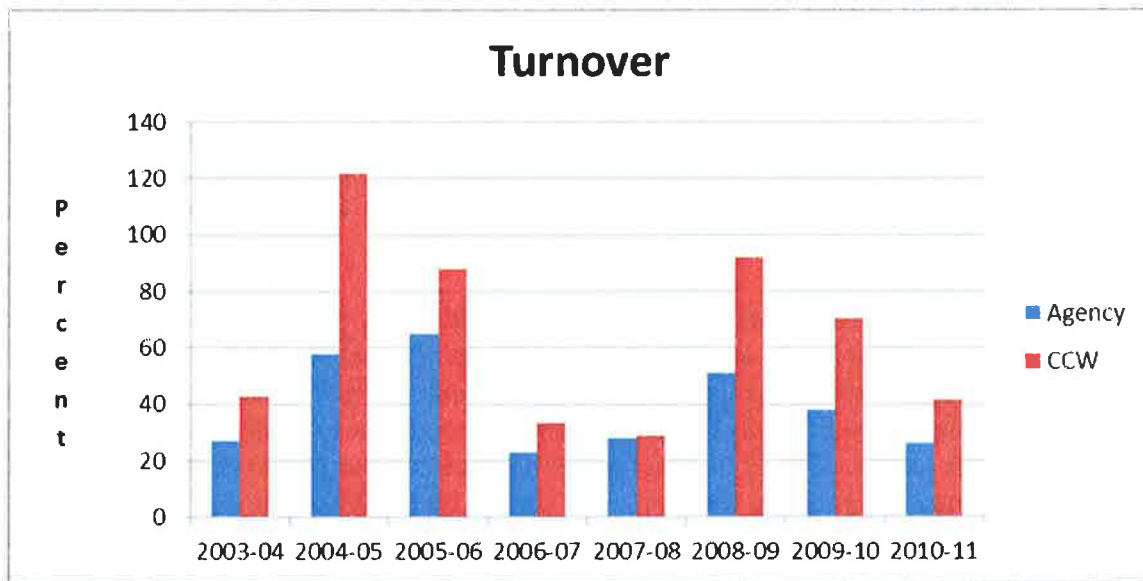
Family Connections' underwent serious struggles this fiscal year with the group home census. While referrals and opened charts at the clinic increased, the Brooke Place census decreased, and with it, important monthly revenues which severely restricted cash flow. The board, the Staffing & Program Committee and the management team studied all aspects of the decline. The fund development committee had to revise its calendar as it referred to the number of times the newsletter was to be published during the fiscal year. The goal of a quarterly newsletter was reduced to three issues due to the expense of publication. The intent, however, was and is, to return to four issues per year when cash flow can more comfortably accommodate this expense.



"There's No Place Like Home" generated increased profits this year, primarily due to a sponsorship/level of giving solicitation letter. Ticket sales, 50/50 profit, and other sources of revenue were almost identical to the 2010 event. After review of the event, it is critical that the committee develop and look to an auxiliary group, tightly monitored by the committee, who will "do the leg work" not only for this event but for other fund raising events that may occur.

Family Connections and the fund development committee must strive to keep the momentum moving forward with the Brooke Place landscaping project. 2010-2011 fundraising efforts have been relatively stationary and, unfortunately, the direction for non-movement or a slowing down is normally downward. With challenge, though, comes renewed opportunity and renewed vigor to keep the community informed about our efforts and to gain their loyalty and support for what the organization can accomplish.

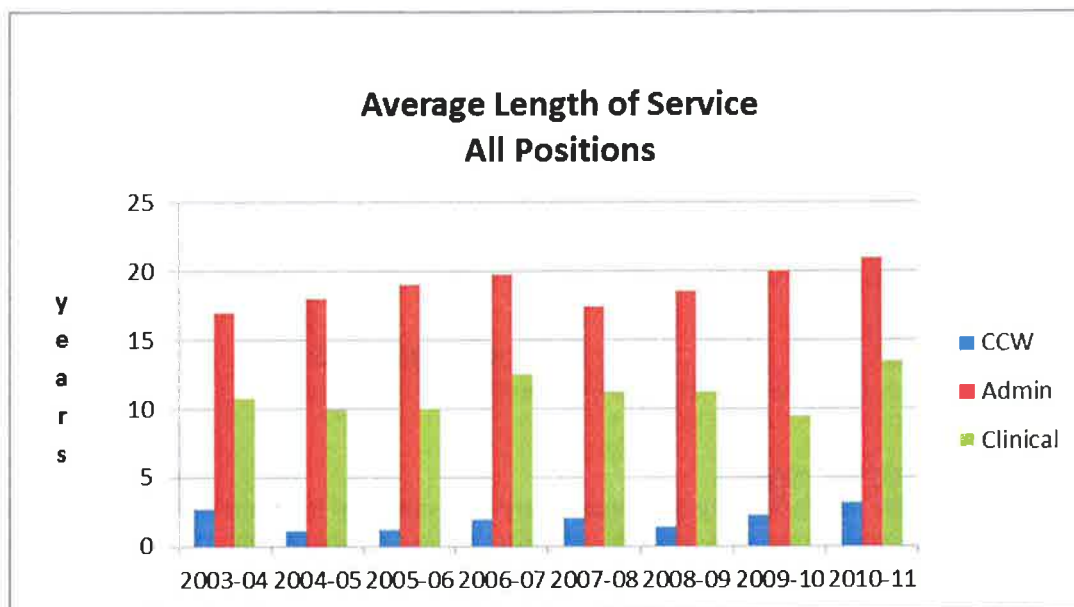
# Human Resources



## Explanation of 10-11 turnover:

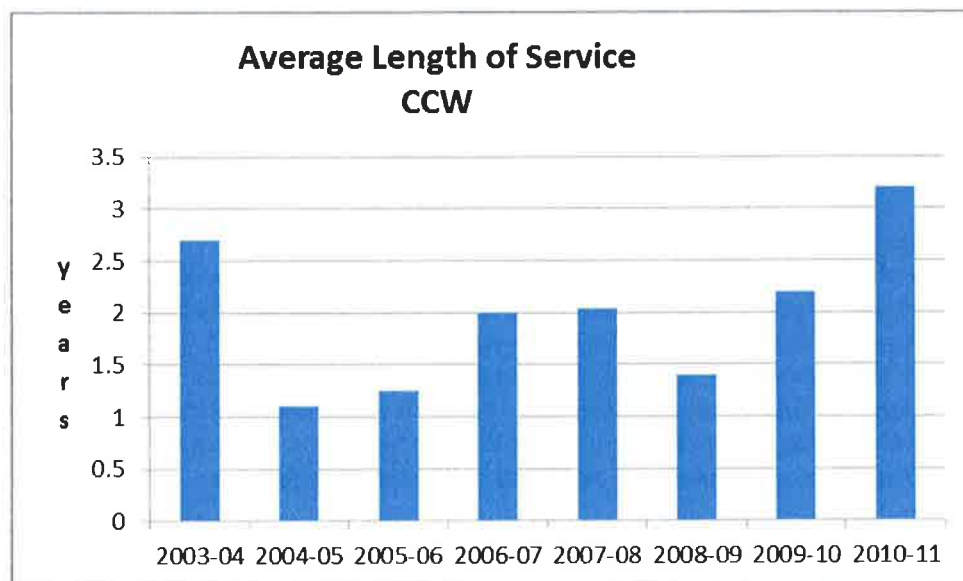
Child care turnover in 10-11 was 41.6% as compared to 70.5% in FY 09-10. Although there is marked improvement, Family Connections did not meet its objective of achieving less than 33 1/3% turnover for the child care worker position. Effective June 30, 2011, we are employing one less than the full complement of child care worker employees, which is nine. Our CQI process continues to monitor our turnover rate and recruitment in general. As a result, an in depth study of our recruitment methods and interview process occurred this past fiscal year. Although it was determined that our practices and policies are sound, our interview questions may not have captured the responses that enabled us to hire the most appropriate person for the job. Behavioral based interviewing was studied with the result of incorporating the process with child care worker recruitment procedures. With only one individual having gone through this process, it is difficult to measure how effective it is. However, those on staff who conduct interviews are satisfied with the process.

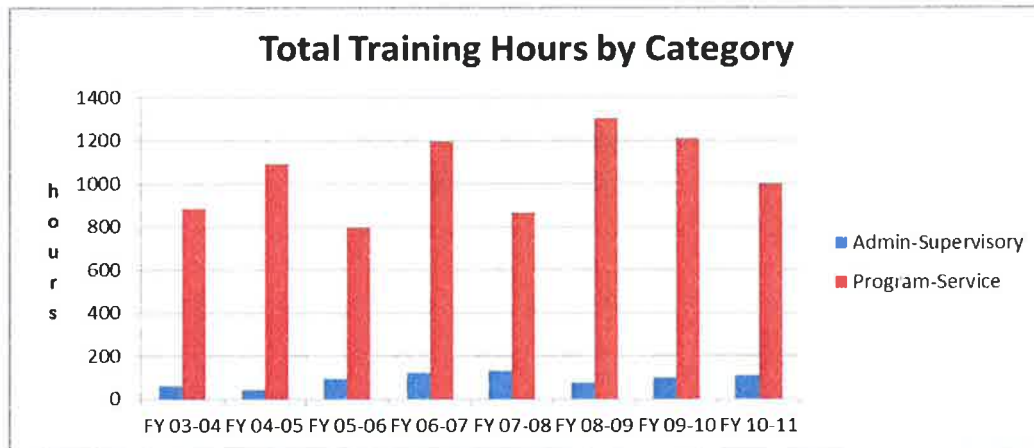
It remains very difficult to attract quality employees to the child care worker position, although this stressor is shared by most agencies who do the same or similar work. The pay is low and the responsibility is high. The general norm seems to be that better pay may attract more applicants but does not necessarily retain the individual. Consequently, the struggle to increase the entry level hourly rate may improve recruitment efforts but not retention. This however is being studied by Management Team and monitored by the designated CQI committee process.



#### Average Length of Service:

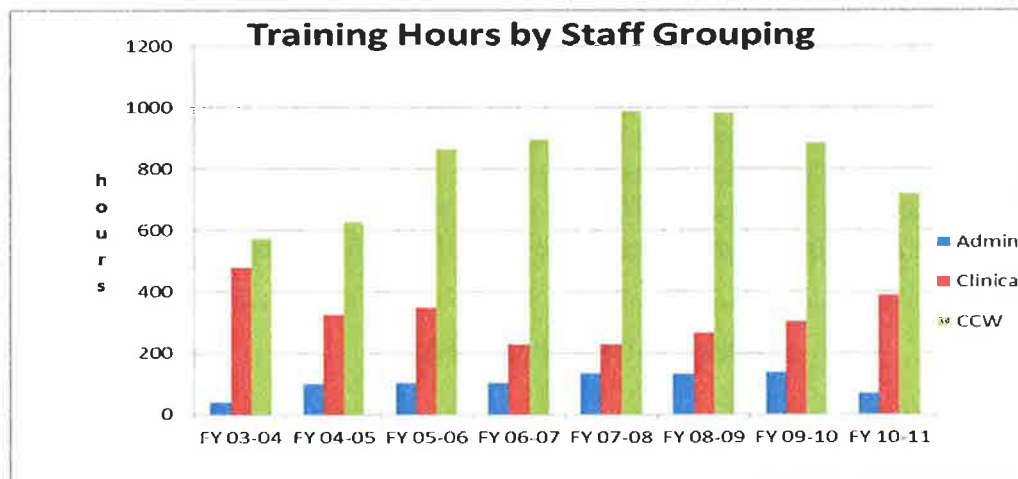
The child care worker's average length of service increased to 3.2 years in FY 10-11 as compared to 2.16 years in FY 09-10 which represents considerable improvement. Last fiscal year, half of the total complement of direct care staff had less than one year of service. In FY 10-11, only one child care worker is on this category. All three shift leader positions are filled. The stability that this length of service creates is palpable, especially during times of "crisis on the floor" and during times of staff shortage when many employees worked more hours than normal. Simply stated, our employees hung in there. The Executive Director and Brooke Place Director are counted both in the administrative and clinical categories as they fulfill both functions.





#### Total Training Hours by Category:

Training hours in the administrative and supervisory area continue to increase which exemplifies the agency's continuing quest to provide its administrative-supervisory staff with as much training as possible in policy and procedure, legal risks and overall risk management. Hours in the program service area dropped this past fiscal year, from 1212.5 to 996.25. The difference is only 16 hours. No training occurred in January due to several weather events and the event could not be rescheduled. This accounted for some of the difference. Scheduled training events in all other months took place as planned.



#### Training Hours by Staff Grouping

For purposes of the staff grouping, the Administrative category consists of the fiscal director and the administrative assistant. The Brooke Place director and executive director are in the Clinical category. Average hours per employee in each grouping are 34.5 (administrative), 193.6 (clinical) and 89.8 (child care worker). Although the overall training for the administrative and child care categories decreased slightly in FY 10-11, clinical training hours increased for clinical staff, largely due to increased off site training hours which were a result of conferences and the executive director pursuing training to fulfill her credential requirements.

The conclusion can be reached from the above that Family Connections employees receive much more education than what is required by licensing standards and, overall, are a highly trained group of employees.