



# WASHINGTON COUNTY CYS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

*Strong Communities Strengthen Families!*

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## May is National Foster Care Month

There are over 423,000 children and youth in foster care across the country, and many have been facing increased isolation over the past year.

It is more critical than ever for communities to work together to prevent child abuse and neglect, support families, and develop meaningful connections for children and youth in foster or kinship care.

As part of our on-going effort to promote family engagement, support family well-being, develop partnerships between birth parents and foster parents, collaborate with community providers, and empower families to have a voice in their case plan, we celebrate this year's National Foster Care Month theme "Foster Care as a Support to Families, Not a Substitute for Parents".

Every child deserves to grow up in a supportive, loving home where they can thrive. Children who have been abused and neglected, removed from their families and placed in foster care are among the most vulnerable children. An ideal world would be one in which no child or youth would experience abuse and neglect, requiring placement into foster care. When foster care is necessary, building supports and opportunities for birth families, and foster families to connect and "co-parent" through this journey is essential to reduce the traumatic impact foster care has on children and youth.

*"We worked together, rather than against one another, in the interest of putting their family back together again."*

*"Being a foster parent is one of the most rewarding experiences you can undertake"*

*-Current Foster Parents*

*"Every kid is one caring adult away from being a success story" -Josh Shipp*



## National Foster Care Month 2021

Foster Care as a Support to Families, Not a Substitute for Parents

[childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth](http://childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth)



Washington County is in need of loving, supportive, and committed foster families to provide a safe, stable home for children and youth ages birth – 21 years. For more information on how you can make a difference in a child's life through foster parenting, please contact WCCYS, Kate Grant, at (724) 228-6884 or e-mail: [grantkat@co.washington.pa.us](mailto:grantkat@co.washington.pa.us)

## Washington County CYS Monthly News and Updates

- Congress passed a new law called "Supporting Foster Youth and Families Through the Pandemic Act", which provides extended support for young people who left, or might be leaving, the child welfare system during the pandemic. This law allows us to provide youth with aftercare services such as room and board assistance, as well as other services like Housing, Education, Employment, and Life Skills. If you are between the ages of 18-27 years, are involved or previously had involvement with a child welfare system and would like information regarding the services that may be available to you, please contact CYS Supervisor, Ashley Blake, at (724) 228-6884.

- Washington County Children and Youth 5 Year Strategic Plan for Keeping Kids Safe while Supporting and Preserving Families is available on our website: <https://washingtoncountyhumanservices.com/agencies/children-youth-services>

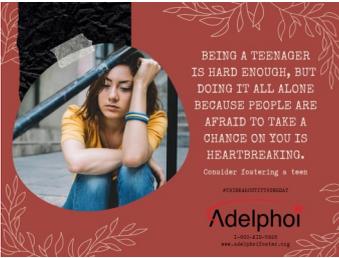
### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Washington County Children and Youth Services is looking for caring individuals who are committed to helping us achieve our mission. We currently have positions available for County Caseworker 1 & 2, County Caseworker Supervisor, and Fiscal Officer III. Please contact Carrie Taylor in the Washington County Human Resources Department at (724) 228-6738 for more information.

# This Month's Highlighted Washington County Foster Care Providers



Pressley Ridge has been helping children since 1832. We believe in doing whatever it takes to create success for children and families. Right now we have more children in need than available foster homes. Since the onset of the pandemic, we have had an average of **1 child referred every 4 days**. Of those children referred, only **25%** are able to be placed. We need **full-time** and **part-time** foster parents to support the children we haven't been able to serve. Through our evidence-based training and high level of various supports, we are able to partner with our foster parents to positively affect the lives of children in foster care and their families. Please contact us to learn how you can make a difference in a child's life by opening up your heart and home.  
**Teresa Gouch:** [tgouch@pressleyridge.org](mailto:tgouch@pressleyridge.org)  
724-366-3264 - [www.pressleyridge.org](http://www.pressleyridge.org) - [www.facebook.com/PressleyRidgeSWC](https://www.facebook.com/PressleyRidgeSWC)



There is a tendency for people to look at younger children and inherently understand that they had nothing to do with their need for placement into foster care, but when we see an older youth or teen in need of foster care there is an assumption that it is because of something they did. The fact of the matter is older youth and teens are victims, too, and most had nothing to do with their need to be safe and protected. There is a significant need for foster families who will consider supporting older youth and teens. Please reach out to us to learn more about our foster care and foster to adopt programs and how you can make a difference for a youth or teen in need of connections, support, and stability.

**Melanie Gresko**  
Recruitment & Family Development Supervisor  
Adelphi Village  
Office: 814-506-8158



Blueprints is hosting a zoom session for anyone interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent on May 13th, from 6pm-8pm!

Join the Blueprints team to discuss the importance of becoming a certified foster home in your community! You will hear from seasoned foster parents, professional partners, and older youth about the rewards of being a foster parent through Blueprints! Please use the Zoom link to join:  
<https://zoom.us/j/97463257383?pwd=Umj3RndXRDBldjFRVGM5UkwvUVlkUT09>



**Fostering hope where it's needed most**  
Loving families just like yours can make a life changing difference for children in need. The Children's Institute's Foster Care Placement Services (formerly part of Project STAR) matches children who are not able to remain at home for a variety of reasons with caring families who can provide a safe and supportive environment.

To learn more about becoming a foster family, please visit our website: <https://www.amazingkids.org/>

To talk with someone directly, please call  
Debra Henry, Manager of the Washington County office, at 724.544.8885



Are you a loving family able to provide a safe home for children in need? Please consider learning more about getting involved with The Bair Foundation. With their nearest office located nearby in Castle Shannon in the South Hills of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, The Bair Foundation offers a variety of foster, adoption, and mental health programs. If you have a heart for helping children from hard places, please consider learning more about the need for fostering in our community and the steps to become a certified caregiver. To learn more about the foster and adoption certification process at The Bair Foundation, please attend one of their upcoming virtual orientations. The next upcoming date is June 7<sup>th</sup> from 5-7pm. Please contact Intake Coordinator Ricky Hoerl at [mhoerl@bair.org](mailto:mhoerl@bair.org) to register!

The Bair Foundation additionally has a Community Residential Rehabilitation (CRR) program. The Bair Foundation is working hard to build up its current bed capacity. This program is geared towards children that require a higher level of care either stepping down from Residential Treatment or residing in a resource family's home. The Bair Foundation treatment team works with the youth and family while supporting their mental/behavioral health needs. If you would be interested in joining the Treatment Resource Parent team, The Bair Foundation CRR Recruiter Abi Biroshak would love to talk to you and your family more about the process of being a CRR host home for local children in need. Consider participating in one of the upcoming virtual orientations to learn more about the process on June 2nd or on July 13th from 6-7:30pm. To learn more about CRR or to register for an orientation, please contact Abi at [abiroshak@bair.org](mailto:abiroshak@bair.org) or [abiroshak@bair.org](mailto:abiroshak@bair.org)