Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2009-2010



Message from the President

Our fiscal year 2009-2010 is one that will always stand out in my mind. That's the time period during which I was diagnosed with cancer and the year I fought for my life. My journey has been about taking care of others, yet this was the year others took care of me. This was the year that my wife, my children, my neighbors, my friends, and my co-workers came through when I needed them. The support I received during this incredibly difficult time period was the perfect illustration that families aren't always comprised of blood-relations, but of people who are there for each other. The nontraditional, and even sometimes temporary, families we work with know this to be true. As one of our veteran foster and adoptive parents likes to say:

"We aren't family by blood, but family by heart."

I hope that you'll take the time to read about some of these 'heart-families' in this Annual Report, as well as the rest of Ennis Center's work with kids in the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

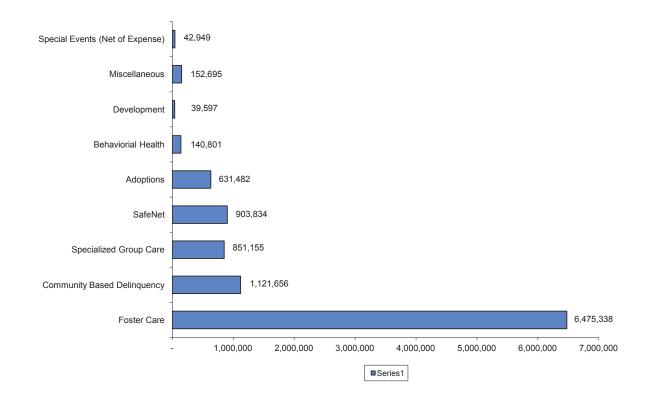
Your support of our agency continues to matter in lives of the sick, the helpless, the abused, the poor, the broken, the wounded, the homeless, the down-on-their-luck, the neglected, the scared, and the anxious---just like family does. I am blessed and grateful to be alive, just as I am grateful for all who help Ennis Center fulfill its promise of a better future for children.

Sincerely,

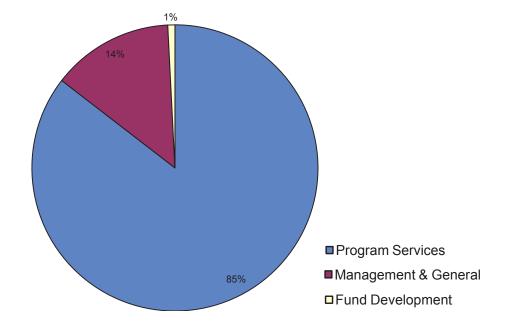
Robert E. Ennis, MSW President and Founder To be added to our mailing list and to receive electronic updates on Ennis Center's programs and events, please send an e-mail to: jennifer.king@enniscenter.org

Revenue

for year ended 9/30/2010



Expenses for year ended 9/30/2010



Life changing work... by the numbers

106

Children leaving foster care and returning to a safer, stronger birth family.

145

Children adopted from foster care.

247

Foster and relative homes caring for children unable to live with their parents.

Ennis Center's foster care program is large, in fact, one of the largest in the State with over 300 children under our care on any given day. The first goal of foster care is always to reunite children with their birth family when possible. For kids, this is the only family they have ever known and they almost always want to be with their mother and/or father. We owe it to the child to assist their family in becoming stronger and ensuring a safe place to grow. We are pleased to have been able to do just that for 106 kids in '09-'10. While birth parents took the steps to correct the problems that brought their children into care, foster parents selflessly opened their homes to these children.

Those who are unable to return home also deserve a loving home. We succeeded in finalizing the adoptions of 145 youth this year, including several teenagers and sibling groups of more than two. With over 150 children who have yet to be adopted on our caseloads, we continue to need adoptive families.



200+

Delinquent teens in Detroit and Wayne County who we helped stay safe, in school, and out of trouble. 11

Programs Ennis
Center operates for
children and families
throughout Southeast
Michigan.

'With the support of the community, we preserve families when possible and create new families when necessary'

-Ennis Center for Children Mission Statement

) save a life

'Are you willing to care for this infant even though there is a 50/50 chance she could die in your home?'

That was the question the Ennis Center licensing worker was obligated to ask veteran foster parents John and Judy Wright about little Baby J, born three months premature and weighing just under 4lbs.

Not easily unnerved, the Wrights said 'Yes' and asked when they could begin visiting the baby in the Neo -Natal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Still in an incubator, Baby J was so very tiny and fragile with a shocking list of no less than 30 medical diagnoses, including blindness, deafness, diabetes, and Chlamydia, in addition to being cocaine, marijuana and alcohol addicted. She had no skin on her hands or feet due to Congenital Syphilis. She continued to lose weight in the NICU but was released to the Wrights care two weeks later when she got her weight up to 4.7 lbs.

With her apnea monitor (tracking her heart and breathing) and oxygen tube her constant companions,

little Baby J came home with the Wrights on a sunny afternoon in June. Judy had received training to become a post-partum Doula and immediately thought of the 'kangaroo care' which promotes skin -to-skin contact as a method of nurturing. Certainly, if any baby could benefit from this sort of care, it was the wisp of life she held in her arms. Judy settled into the lounge chair in her living room and stayed there for six weeks. That's how long it took before Baby J's heartbeat wouldn't stop when she was put down.

The baby was not gaining weight and responded very poorly to feeding time, arching her back, gagging and choking. Even more visible and terrifying was that she began to lose pigmentation and her skin started to peel off. Alarmed, Judy discussed this with the Pediatrician who broke it down simply by stating, "If baby eats, she lives. If she doesn't, she'll die." Knowing in her gut that something was terribly wrong, Judy asked to try the child on donated breast milk. Armed with a Pediatrician's letter recommending this type of special feeding, Judy approached Ennis Center, determined to gain approval. She was relieved when she wasn't met with resistance centered around this non-traditional request. In fact, Ennis Center helped Judy obtain the proper clearances and on the first day Baby J was fed breast milk, her heart monitor didn't go off once. Two days later, Baby J's eyes focused on her foster mother's face for the first



Foster Parent Judy Wright with Baby J

time. Four days later, the infant startled when the dog barked...amazingly, doctors soon found that she was no longer deaf or blind.

It was later discovered that Baby J was allergic to corn syrup, an ingredient found in the majority of food products, including infant formula. Everything that she had been fed to nurture her had instead been toxic to her

soon found that she was no longer deaf or blind...

little body. So, doctors explained, she only had enough strength to focus on one **Amazingly, doctors** thing: keeping her heart beating. Important donations of breast milk were received from throughout the country and even Canada. Slowly, Baby J began gaining weight and at 20 months old, weighed 20 lbs, not a lot by most standards, but well beyond previous expectations and medical forecasts. This would not be Baby J's last triumph over the odds.

> In January of 2010, doctors discovered that Baby J had been born without a pancreas. Pancreatic Agenesis has been diagnosed in roughly 20 people and 69% of them did not live past six weeks old. Baby J wasn't even diagnosed until nine months of age! In order to plan for the care of this unprecedented

condition, the baby was hospitalized for fourteen days. She had a whole team of specialists and professionals caring for her, but most importantly, Judy Wright, the woman who held her, restarted her heart, and nourished her body from the moment she left the hospital, was with her for all of those days.

Not long after the hospital stay, the Wrights received a call from Ennis Center telling them that a new baby boy, again drug and alcohol addicted, had just been born to Baby J's birth mother. For Baby J, the parental rights of her mother had been terminated within just a few months of her discharge from the hospital. It was likely that the mother would lose rights to her son as well. The Wrights took the new baby (who had his own set of health problems) home to his sister.

Judy and John Wright will not be adopting Baby J or Michael, just as they haven't adopted any of the other 44 children they have fostered in the last 10 years. They believe it's their calling to be available to provide temporary care for babies who could need them, especially the medically fragile. If they were to adopt Baby J and her brother, they would no longer be able to do this important work. However, it is through them, at their church, that Baby J and Michael were introduced to the couple who would become their adoptive parents, Callie and Mark Nelson. The Wrights and the Nelsons orchestrated a slow transition, afraid that Baby J's newfound health could still fade away with any abrupt changes. Callie and Judy co-parented for four months, with Callie

"It isn't about us, it's about the child and what's best for them." -John Wright, Foster parent attending all of Baby J's appointments and at times staying at the Wrights' home overnight to learn to care for the babies in the wee hours. Even now, the families visit almost weekly. Sometimes this is at the Nelson's 'forever home' and sometimes at the Wrights, where the trajectories of young lives were forever changed.

When asked how they are able to spend so much time caring for and loving children and then turn them over to other parents, the Wrights don't hesitate to answer, "It isn't about us, it's about the child and what is best for them. We feel so blessed to have participated in Baby J and Michael's lives. Their family is so thrilled to have them. We helped make a family." Most of all, because of their journey with little Baby J, the Wrights say they "no longer believe in luck or coincidences, we be-

lieve in miracles. To see Baby J now, happy and with such a sense of humor...we've seen more miracles in the last two years than most could hope to see in two lifetimes."

Ennis Center is in awe of the dedication of the Wrights, who are quick to praise Ennis Center as well. "We always felt like the agency was our partner in caring for Baby J, never letting us feel like we were in it by ourselves. Our caseworker called us on weekends, gave us her personal cell phone number, and President Bob Ennis said they would cover expenses the State wouldn't. As a foster parent, if you know you can count on an agency, it helps you relax about one aspect of raising a child and gives you peace of mind," says Judy Wright.

In just 18 months, the Wrights took Baby J to over 495 appointments. In just 18 months, a village surrounded an innocent child born under devastating circumstances. The numerous medical professionals, those who donated their breast milk, and Ennis Center all joined with these special foster parents to allow Baby J a chance to live. She and her brother now have a world of possibilities in front of them, the promise of a future better than their past, fulfilled.

How You Can Help

Become a Foster or Adoptive Parent Ennis Center provides its foster parents with training, ongoing support and financial reimbursement. Please call 888-200-8915 (Oakland/Genesee County) or 800-492-3678 (Wayne/St. Clair County) to learn more about how you can make a difference in the life of a child.

Consider a donation to one of the following:

Operational Fund

Supports our overall agency and its programs for children and families This contribution allows our leadership to apply your gift to the area of greatest need.

Scholarship Fund

Awards scholarships to former Ennis Center foster children pursuing a college or technical school degree

Holiday Fund

Helps provide holiday gifts and holiday parties for our kids, many of whom come from poverty and may not know the warmth of the season

Endowment Fund

Will help ensure Ennis Center is a lasting resource for children and families in need

Youth Special Needs Fund

Ensures that our children get what they need (tutoring, drivers training, special medical devices, etc) and are afforded the same opportunities as their peers

If you'd like to learn more about Ennis Center, or other ways you can help, please call our Development Department at 810-233-4031

Individual Donors

Next to excellent programs with qualified and dedicated staff, financial support from the community is the most vital component to the ability of a non-profit to make positive changes in our communities. We consider our donors our partners in the work we do every day. The following gave between 10/01/09 - 9/30/10.

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Deterding, Dru Anne

Dimic, John

Dosmann, William & Jeanne

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Ellwood, Dennis & Loretta

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Corporations that donate to Ennis Center help us meet our mission, and often enable their employees to become involved in our cause as well. Groups that come together and have charitable giving as part of their priorities do so because they understand the importance of community. The following gave between 10/01/09 - 9/30/10.

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Pioneer Automotive Technolgies

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Plastikon Industries, Inc.

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Praetorian International LLC

Prototech Laser, Inc.

Randolph's Salon (Ashley Roos)

Red Hat Society-

Longtime Lassies Chapter

Red Hat Society-

Ruby Jewels Chapter

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Sara Lee Corporation

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Snack Time Service

Spectrum Human Services

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Students & Faculty

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UAW Local 653

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United States Steel Corp.

UnitedHealthcare

Volkswagen Group of America-

Warranty Parts Return Center

Walbridge Aldinger

Wend & Associates, Inc.

Wolverine Human Services

My story of change.



Our thanks to Iyona (pictured) for sharing her story.

When I was 12 years old, my Mother was diagnosed with Schizophrenia, a serious mental illness. She was my only parent (my Father was deceased) and she was having a really hard time managing her disease. My home life was very unpredictable, to say the least. When I was 14 years old, I began skipping school and getting in trouble with the law. I was removed from my home and placed in foster care, from which I ran away. Then I had to stay in a residential facility. Eventually, my Aunt got guardianship of me. I was a mess.

Around this time, I was enrolled in the JJDRA (Juvenile Justice Diversion and Reintegration Alternatives) program at Ennis Center for Children. Their staff visited me in my home, gave me bus passes to make sure I

got to school, and met with me, my Aunt, and my Mom regularly. I continued to struggle but started to surprise myself with the good decisions I made. For the first time, I started to think that I was smart and maybe I wasn't stuck in the bad place I grew up, that I could go places.

This December I will graduate with a Bachelors Degree in Criminal Justice. I'm completing my internship at Ennis Center. I would love to become a Defense Attorney with my own practice someday. I don't think there's a kid out there that is just 'bad'. The key lies in prevention work, particularly when a child is growing up in poverty with family problems. Remembering how it was to be a teenager and getting to them on their level before they shut down is important. We have to find a method that works to get them to think about who they are, who they want to be and what they want out of life. I remember what I went through like it was yesterday because I struggled for so long...I feel like I can help.

Note: After several years, Ennis Center was outbid for a JJDRA contract and despite success with youth like Iyona, was unable to continue the program.

You can help us show a child the possibility of a future better than their past....



We need empty HP printer cartridges and VG's receipts!

Both can be turned into cash for our organization.

Please call our Development Department
at 810-233-4031 to discuss delivery or pick-up.

How others are helping.

The Ruby Jewels of the Red Hat Society provided backpacks filled with school supplies for children in foster care.





Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.
-Margaret Mead

GoodSearch You Search or Shop... We Give!

Ennis Center can earn a donation when you shop online!

Download the GoodSearch – Ennis Center for Children toolbar at http://www.goodsearch.com/toolbar/ ennis-center-for-children and each time you shop online at participating stores including Amazon, eBay, Target, Staples, a percentage of your purchase will be donated - even if you forget to go to GoodShop or GoodSearch first!



Teams of volunteers from Volkswagen of America's Auburn Hills facility spent two days cleaning, painting, and decorating general areas and the family visiting rooms at one of our Detroit offices. Children in foster care spend time in these rooms in situations that can cause anxiety, such as visits with birth parents or meeting a potential adoptive parent for the first time.

These rooms are now more inviting and comfortable for them.

Toyota Hosts Fundraiser for Ennis Center Programs

The Annual Toyota Supplier Charity Golf Outing held at Moose Ridge Golf Course on June 19, 2010 raised over \$27,000 to support Ennis Center's programs for abused and neglected children and families in crisis. During their 15 year association with Ennis Center. Toyota contributions, including this fundraiser, have made a huge impact on our ability to show young people the possibility of a future better than their past. Many Toyota employees have also chosen to support our agency through volunteerism and private contributions vital to our ability to remain a resource for Michigan's underprivileged children and families.

How others are helping.

Annual Summer Picnic Lets Kids Just Be Kids

Most of the children we work with in foster care experience feelings of guilt and anger about their family situation, along with many other emotions beyond their years. While it is true that they display amazing strength and resiliency while we are helping them toward a better future, it's important to provide opportunities for carefree play.

As a non-profit, we are experts at working within a bare bones budget, particularly for the picnic as its expenses are not covered by our contracts. When

our friends at Title Source learned of the event, and our puny budget, their team members enthusiastically conducted several in-house fundraisers with the goal

of giving our kids a bigger and better picnic! Thanks to their efforts and a very generous donation from one of their Directors, our kids arrived to find new inflatable games, bounce houses, food options, and more. They especially loved seeing the grown-ups get wet in the dunk tank! Not only did Title Source team members raise money to cover the costs of this great event, but volunteered their time at the picnic, too. Our heartfelt thanks to Jason Hall, Colleen Ramsey,

Karen Popilek, and all at Title Source for providing these children, who have been through so much in their young lives, with wonderful memories of a day spent in the sun.



A child dressed as popular cartoon character, Handy Manny, enjoys a bite at one of our Halloween parties.

Students at Anderson Elementary assemble Halloween treat bags for kids in Ennis Center's foster care program.



Spotlight on: SafeNet Program

While society generally has great sympathy for children who have been sexually abused, the opposite is true when that child becomes the abuser. Sexual abuse is a sensitive topic that many have a hard time thinking about or discussing. Unfortunately, the reality of sexual abuse is that it occurs at devastatingly high rates. Our 30+ years of experience with children in foster care and our commitment to <u>all</u> children made us want to address the issue of sexual abuse in a proactive way.

Ennis Center's SafeNet Program follows a national model for young sexual offenders (12-18 years of age) in order to prevent the sexual abuse of children. We have been fortunate to have an amazing, specially-trained staff who use specific therapeutic skills to make clients aware of factors leading to their offense, their thought processes during the offense and its after-effects. They work intensively with the individual and their family to change behaviors, thought processes, and decision-making. Clients must also submit to lie detector testing, drug testing and agree to peer group therapy.

With the idea that the majority of sexual abuse is perpetrated by those who have been victimized, and by working with underage offenders, the SafeNet program aims to break the cycle of abuse early. This program began in 2001 and has graduated over 500 youth. To date, none have been convicted of another sex crime. While uncomfortable, we feel duty bound to continue talking about sexual abuse, finding ways to help victims and underage offenders.

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