Who We Are

Family Services is a non-profit organization that protects, heals and cares for the children and families of Northeast Wisconsin. We offer over 30 comprehensive programs that support the people of our communities during challenges and transitions in their lives.

How We Help

In times of need, in times of challenge, and in times of crisis, Family Services is here with a helping hand. Whether it's providing support for a baby born into a high-risk family, safe shelter for a homeless youth, or immediate intervention for a teen contemplating suicide, Family Services and our caring staff are improving the lives of thousands of children and families in our communities each year.

We assist more than 18,000 children and families each year from offices throughout Northeast Wisconsin.
2014 was an important year of transition and growth for Family Services. In April, former Executive Vice President, Jeff Vande Leest, transitioned to the role of President & CEO, replacing Tom Martin after 27 years of leadership with the agency. It was a year of growth, as we saw an increase in overall program revenue of 4.5%, or $560,000, over our 2013 totals. It was also a year of considerable impact, as Family Services touched the lives of more than 18,000 individuals and families throughout Northeast Wisconsin and remains a driving force behind the development of stronger families and stronger communities in our region.

When you deliver an array of services across many communities, with more than 30 specialized programs, it is often difficult to portray the bigger picture of our impact on the communities we serve. But here we attempt to tell the Family Services story. In the pages that follow, you will read stories from individuals served by Family Services. These stories are dramatic and they are true. The stories we share represent the trauma of abuse, abandonment and loss experienced by countless individuals in our communities each year.

The Family Services story is not one of individual programs or services. It is not a story of special events or organizational changes. It is the story of real people experiencing real life situations, and how Family Services is there to hear these stories and assist individuals and families to overcome their trauma and lead successful and meaningful lives.

Quite simply, ours is a story of:

> Protecting. Family Services is strongly committed to protecting children and vulnerable individuals from abuse and sexual assault.

> Healing. When traumatic situations do occur, Family Services is there to assist the individual or family with their journey of healing and recovery.

> Caring. Family Services is there to care for individuals who are isolated, abandoned or just need help developing the skills to live successfully.

Whether you are a friend of Family Services, a donor, or just an interested community member, remember our story and the stories of those we serve. They are the reason behind our unwavering commitment to Protect, Heal, and Care.

Jeff Vande Leest, President & CEO
Family Services

Geoff Lacy, Board Chair
Davis & Kuelthau, SC
Year in Review

Vande Leest Announced as New President & CEO

On April 1, 2014, Jeff Vande Leest officially took over the position of President & CEO of Family Services, succeeding Tom Martin who retired after 27 years with agency. Jeff’s hiring came after a nationwide search and an extensive interview process that included applicants from around the country.

Jeff has been with Family Services for more than 18 years, most recently serving as Executive Vice President. At a welcome reception held on April 8, he stated, “Together with our leadership team and a talented and dedicated staff, I welcome the challenge as we continue our mission to protect, heal and care for the individuals and families in our communities.”

Sexual Assault Center Celebrates 40 Years

On April 15, 2014, the Sexual Assault Center of Family Services held a breakfast reception to celebrate the center’s 40th anniversary and recognize Sexual Assault Awareness Month in our community. Guests included past contributors to the center, including a few of the founding members, and representatives of many partnering agencies throughout Brown County.

Sexual Assault Center Director, Sue Lockwood, presented two special recognition awards at the event. Brown County United Way received the “Visionary Award” for their role in the development of the center. Karen Dorau, the first Victim Witness Coordinator with the Brown County District Attorney’s Office and one of the center’s first Directors, received the “Excellence in Advocacy Award” for her continued support of sexual assault victims.

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Cheers to Giving all Children a Healthy and Nurturing Start in Life

In a blog post from the Alliance for Children & Families in July 2014, Family Services and the Healthy Families program received accolades for their part in the Community Partnership for Children (CPC) initiative in Brown County. This is a community-wide effort, coordinated by Brown County United Way, involving nearly 60 organizations to help meet the goal of ensuring that every Brown County child is “safe, healthy and ready for kindergarten.”

Alliance President & CEO, Susan Dreyfus, commended Green Bay area communities for investing in its people. She also commends the Healthy Families program for the measurable outcomes and positive results of the CPC initiative.

Schreiber Grant Helps Continue Services to Victims of Sexual Assault

Services to sexual assault victims in our area have been continued, thanks in part to a generous grant received from Schreiber Foods. The grant helps to replace a recent loss of government funding to ensure that we can continue to provide advocacy and support services to victims of sexual assault in our area.
Dancing for Little Stars

A crowd of 420 guests joined us at Dancing for Little Stars on the evening of Friday, April 11 at the Oshkosh Convention Center. Hosted by Parent Connection of Oshkosh, the event is held each April in honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The 2014 event raised proceeds of $44,800 for Parent Connection’s early childhood education services.

The award for Biggest Fundraisers of the night went to Liz Rice Janzen and Ted Balser, with Bella College of Cosmetology winning for Best Costume and High School Reunion winning the award for Best Dance. Our 2014 Community Awards were presented to Dr. Michelle Wihlm and Pastor John Hobbies for going above and beyond to support and care for children and families in our area.

Butterfly Festival - Helping Families Fly

Spirits were high and everyone had fun at the 6th Annual Butterfly Festival held on Saturday, June 21 to benefit the Parent Connection program. Just over 2,800 guests joined us for the event at City Park in downtown Appleton, our highest attendance yet.

Parents and their young children participated in games and family fun activities throughout the morning. The highlight of the event was a group butterfly release of nearly 1,000 butterflies representing Parent Connection’s dedication to “Helping Families Fly.”

With the generous support of our sponsors, contributors and guests, the 2014 Butterfly Festival raised record proceeds of more than $65,000 for child abuse prevention services in the Fox Valley area.

Be the Light Walk for Suicide Prevention

The Crisis Center of Family Services was a partner in the Be the Light Walk for Suicide Prevention held on Saturday, September 6. More than 900 people carried lights through the streets of De Pere, raising awareness of the issue of suicide in the hopes of preventing more deaths from occurring.

Proceeds from the event support suicide prevention efforts in Brown County, including QPR (Question, Persuade and Refer) training and other outreach programs for youth and adults.

Record Year at the Green & Gold Gala

It was another record setting year at the 26th annual Green & Gold Gala, held on the evening of Friday, September 12 at the Lambeau Field Atrium. We were joined by a crowd of 570 guests, including 33 Packers Alumni from the 1960’s through 2010.

This year’s event featured a Panel discussion with five well known Packers Alumni: Jerry Kramer, Dave Robinson, Paul Coffman, Santana Dotson and Ryan Longwell. Larry McCarren served as the moderator of that discussion, which provided a lot of laughs and entertainment as players reminisced about games and teammates of the past.

Family Services’ 2014 community awards were presented to Susanne Lumsden and Schreiber Foods, in recognition of their outstanding contributions to kids and families in our communities.

Through event sponsorships, individual registrations, donations, raffles and auctions, the 2014 Green & Gold Gala raised record proceeds of $240,097 for Family Services programs that protect, heal, and care for our local kids and families.

Special Events
Family Services protects children who are born into high risk homes, giving them hope to grow and thrive in a safe environment.
A Light in the Darkness

Three years ago, a young couple, Leah and Thomas, enrolled in Family Services’ Healthy Families program. Leah had just given birth to a baby girl, her first child. Thomas had a son from another relationship who also frequently stayed with them.

Leah was struggling with a drug addiction. She was getting help and really wanted to be there for her family. They asked to schedule their home visits around Thomas’ work schedule so he could participate. They had a lot of questions about the baby, and needed some guidance with the older child as well. A Family Support Worker and Fatherhood Education Specialist from the program teamed up to provide services to the family.

Tragically, about four months after their daughter’s birth, Leah died as a result of an accidental overdose. Thomas was beside himself - still grieving, he now found himself to be a single parent of a small baby. He also soon became the sole parent to his other child as well. Leah’s family did not want anything to do with him or the baby. Thomas’ family was not supportive either and did little to help.

Throughout this hard time, Thomas continued to meet with his workers, never missing a visit. He continued to work full-time and found a good day care for his kids. The workers were able to help him with child development information, nutrition and safety. He also got help navigating the school system and enrolled his daughter into Head Start to make sure she’d be ready for Kindergarten.

His children are now three and five years old. Thomas is still enrolled in the program, though visits have decreased and he is doing well on his own. The children are developmentally on track and have a bright future ahead of them, thanks to support and guidance available to them at a crucial time in their lives.

Early Childhood Development programs

Green Bay:
- Families First
- Healthy Families
- Early Head Start
- Post-Adoption Resource Center

Fox Valley & Oshkosh:
- Parent Connection

Door County:
- Healthy Families
- Parent Education

In 2014, Family Services helped 1,777 families through home visitation and intensive support, protecting young children and teaching life skills to lead them toward a brighter future.
Family Services helps individuals who have been abused or are struggling with mental health and behavioral issues to overcome their past and begin to heal.
A Journey to Healing

Sarah had been out with friends when she suddenly felt ill. She walked towards the bathroom, but the next thing she remembered, she was waking up in the hospital. After some tests, it was discovered that she was the victim of a date rape drug. A Sexual Assault Center advocate was called to the hospital. The advocate supported Sarah through her medical exam and provided her with information about the services offered by the Sexual Assault Center. Sarah appeared to be handling her situation, but agreed to contact the center if she needed help.

Three days later, Sarah came to the Sexual Assault Center emotionally distressed as she was beginning to remember pieces of the assault. A counselor worked with her to help her understand what was happening and how she could begin to deal with her traumatic experience. She also helped her set up a support system and treatment plan with a therapist at Family Services.

She struggled for the first few months, increasingly having flashbacks of the assault which made it difficult for her to concentrate at work and afraid when she was home alone. She was also suffering from anxiety and depression caused by the fear her assault created. With determination, she continued to attend her therapy sessions and worked hard with her advocate to remain positive and focused on her future. During this time, the advocate was also able to help Sarah understand the legal process involved and accompanied her to appointments and hearings.

Sarah is now doing much better at work, at home, and in public. Through her on-going therapy she is learning how to manage the effects of the abuse and begin her healing process.

In 2014, Family Services provided counseling & treatment services to 3,836 people in our communities, encouraging and inspiring them to make positive changes in their lives.
Care

Family Services cares for youth & families in crisis, giving them the strength to overcome challenges and the opportunity to find happiness in life.
Help When It’s Needed Most

Amanda was 16 years old when she was referred to Family Services’ runaway and street outreach program, Open Door Youth Services. She had recently been kicked out of her home by her abusive mother and stepfather and was struggling in school. With no other family to turn to, Amanda had been “couch surfing”, sleeping at friends’ houses or wherever she could find a place to spend the night. She was feeling rejected by her family, her grades were declining, and she was unsure about her future.

Our advocate first helped Amanda get some basic living items, such as food and hygiene products, and then began working with her on finding a safe place to stay. We tried to reunite Amanda with her family by bringing them together to talk about their past issues, which led to her moving back home. However, a short time later, the situation got more complicated when Amanda learned she was pregnant. Her mother immediately asked her again to leave.

Amanda’s advocate then connected her with a local faith based resource for pregnant and parenting mothers, helping her secure a bed at this shelter on a temporary basis. We also connected her with the teen parenting program at her school which will be of great support to her and her child as she completes high school.

As Amanda began to bring her life in order, the advocate suggested a long-term housing solution through Family Services’ Transitional Living Program. This program helps homeless youth find a safe apartment while teaching them valuable independent living skills to succeed in life.

Amanda is now enrolled in that program, continues to improve her grades, works part-time and is prepared for the birth of her child. She has a long road ahead, but knows with Family Services’ support she can be successful.

In 2014, Family Services provided crisis counseling and case management to 11,610 individuals throughout Northeast Wisconsin giving them strength and hope in their greatest time of need.
Thank you to our Donors

Contributions from individuals, businesses and other organizations help us carry out our mission. In appreciation for their commitment and support, the following pages list all who have made a financial contribution to Family Services in 2014. Thank you for your support!

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Champions ($1,000 - $2,499)

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Bank First National
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