

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
9 A.M. EDT, July 26, 2007

AGENCY AWARDED FUNDING FOR TREATMENT FOSTER CARE

HARBORCREEK, PA; JULY 26, 2007: Harborcreek Youth Services, a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility, has been selected by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) to receive \$670,000 (payable over a four-year period) to establish a Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) program. MTFC will address the needs of severely delinquent male and female adolescents, ages 12 through 17, for whom in-home therapy is not an option. MTFC differs from traditional foster care in that foster parents are not just caregivers, but indispensable members of a treatment team that includes a child psychiatrist, a program supervisor, an individual therapist, and a skills trainer. Foster families are trained in behavior management and are supported by a program supervisor who coordinates all aspects of the adolescent's treatment program. Children are placed individually in treatment foster homes for a period of six to nine months. While the adolescent is in foster care, a family therapist works with the child's biological parents or guardians to resolve any issues that may have contributed to the delinquency.

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Four key elements are targeted in MTFC and in aftercare:

- Providing youth with a consistent, reinforcing environment that builds on individual strengths
- Providing clear structure and limits with well-specified consequences
- Providing close supervision of the youth's whereabouts and activities
- Helping youth avoid associations with peers who are likely to have a negative influence, and developing skills for building relationships with positive peers.

Since the launch of the first MTFC program in Oregon in 1983, many identical programs have been established throughout the world. Numerous research studies have confirmed that the program model yields impressive outcomes. When compared with delinquent youth in residential placement, children in treatment foster care

- Are less than half as likely to be arrested or incarcerated in follow-up
- Are much less likely to run away from the program
- Have significantly less hard drug use in follow-up
- Are more likely to return to live with their parents.

In addition, MTFC has been determined to be the most economically beneficial of the juvenile justice programs, with an estimated benefit-to-cost ratio of \$43.70 for every dollar spent.

According to John Petulla, CEO of Harborcreek Youth Services, “The Erie County Policy and Planning Council, Juvenile Probation, and the Office of Children and Youth all supported our application for PCCD funding and will be working with us to ensure the program’s success. We’re excited about MTFC and believe it will be of great benefit in addressing the need for intensive foster care in Erie and Crawford Counties.”

Amy Daley, former Director of Intake and Case Management at Harborcreek Youth Services, has been named Director of Community Programs and will be serving as the MTFC Program Supervisor. Anyone interested in investigating the possibility of serving as a treatment foster parent is encouraged to call Amy at (814) 899-7664, Extension 356, or to send e-mail to adaley@hys-erie.org. Experience is less important than a desire to have a positive impact on the life of a child.

Harborcreek Youth Services was founded in 1911 by the Sisters of Saint Joseph and is affiliated with Catholic Charities, Diocese of Erie. The agency maintains five on-campus treatment units and three community-based group homes, as well as a specialized school, a chapel, and recreational facilities. Admissions, the provision of services, and client referrals are made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English language proficiency), age, or sex.

Harborcreek Youth Services was recently accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA), an international, independent accrediting agency dedicated to promoting top-quality child and family services and behavioral healthcare.

For more information about treatment foster care, please call John Petulla at (814) 899-7664.

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