

## A Critical Response



Recently, I was at a school speaking with clinicians about spiritual tools and resources for support. Among the resources discussed were faith communities that provide hope and support to kids who've experienced trauma. One clinician mentioned the challenge of knowing which faith communities were up for the task. This is a significant challenge that requires finding faith communities carrying out such practices as meeting students where they are, growing in their understanding of trauma and even stepping out into foster care. As we see mental health crises rising, such a response is critical. Is your faith community up for the task?

Contact Dave Eckert, Chaplain and Director of Intersect (215) 540-2150, x1286  
DEckert@accessservices.org

## Job Opportunities

Part Time Therapeutic Support Staff in Tamaqua, PA

Provide one-on-one behavioral intervention with a child/adolescent while supporting the family.

Contact Nancy (215) 540-2150, x1365  
NNguyen@accessservices.org

## Giving Tuesday and Holiday Shopping

The Tuesday after Thanksgiving is Giving Tuesday and it is your opportunity to support Hope 4 Tomorrow (H4T), a powerful initiative of Access Services. H4T brings an interactive suicide prevention/mental health program into the school setting. Students learn that it is ok to talk about their mental health and where to find help; the school gets real-time information about how to best help their students. Gifts made on-line on Tuesday December 3rd will support H4T.

**Amazon Smile for Access Services:** Did you know that when you shop for the holidays at smile.amazon.com/ch/23-2003056, Amazon Smile donates a small percentage of your total to Access Services Inc? It's an easy way to show your support.

Contact Linda Wasilchick, Director of Resource Development (215) 540-2150, x1357  
LWasilchick@accessservices.org



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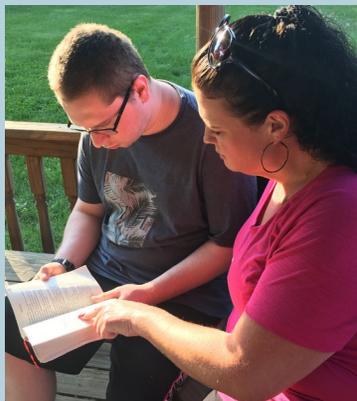
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## Program Highlights

### Direct Support Professional Wins Award



"There were a lot of people, both in our family and the community, that had doubts with John and didn't think he would be able to achieve anything of value. Today, he's proven them all wrong and I think it's, in no small way, thanks to Amanda."

This powerful testimony, provided by John's father, demonstrates the excellent care that Amanda, a Direct Support Professional at Access Services, provides each of the people she supports.

Amanda has helped John in many ways. She helped him complete the documentation that was necessary for him to

secure a full-time job. He learned how to schedule his own bus for work. He made a shopping list and budget, not only for himself, but for his entire family. These life strides led to John being provided a personal achievement award from his local county. Amanda continues to be an encouragement to John, cheering him on at Special Olympics and helping him socialize and make new friends.

Greg Mundy, Amanda's supervisor, was inspired to nominate her for the PAR 2019 **We are Worth It Award**. This award recognizes outstanding Direct Support Professionals who have demonstrated extraordinary and innovative support and action that lead people with an intellectual disability and/or autism to live meaningful and inclusive lives.

Greg wrote, "Amanda shows great care and dedication when it comes to working with the individuals she supports. She works to form trust with them, doing this so well that the individuals consider her a friend and even part of the family."

On Monday, October 21st, Amanda was honored with this award from PAR, the largest and most active association of intellectual disability and autism service providers in Pennsylvania.

**Congratulations Amanda!**

Contact Tina Jorett, Senior Director of In-Home Supports (215) 540-2150, x1317  
TJorett@accessservices.org

Opt out of these mailings or request to receive our digital e-newsletter by emailing ktizzard@accessservices.org or calling (215) 540-2150, x1282.



### Foster Care Opportunities

[www.accessservices.org/explore-fostering](http://www.accessservices.org/explore-fostering)

### Lifesharing Opportunities

[www.accessservices.org/explore-lifesharing](http://www.accessservices.org/explore-lifesharing)

Contact Donna for more information:  
Donna Donnelly (215) 540-2150, x1304  
DDonnelly@accessservices.org



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# ACCESS SERVICES

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Access Services, a 43 year-old nonprofit organization, operates in ten Pennsylvania counties, offering services for children, adults, and families. The mission of Access Services is to empower and serve people in need of specialized supports by providing innovative services that improve their ability to live fulfilling lives in the community.

November 2019

## It's Okay to Get Attached!



Foster care is when a child lives with and is cared for by people who are not that child's parents. The need for foster care is very real – and is needed for reasons, such as homelessness, abuse, neglect, and parental substance abuse.

The shortage of foster homes is a nationwide issue. Pennsylvania has approximately 14,000 children in foster care, on average, these children remain in foster care for 11.9 months. Many have to enter residential facilities due to a shortage of foster homes.

Children can thrive in family settings that provide the attention, love and stability they need. However, what I often hear when talking to potential foster parents is, "I couldn't do it," or, "I would get too attached." It's important to remember - getting attached is a good thing!

Shannon Salvo, Assistant Director of the Foster Care program shared some thoughts on her family's experience as foster parents. "I have lots of memories both sweet and painful, regarding my experiences during those years. At the end of the day, though, when I look back, I see the children whose lives we were able to impact and the tiny lives that greatly impacted ours."

"It hurts to say goodbye but due to strong relationships that you form with the children and your investment in their lives, we've been able to remain close since reunification to the children and their biological families. Salvo continued, "To me, this is the best of foster care – when foster parents risk the pain to become appropriately attached and are then able to remain connected post-reunification."

"This way kiddos win, over and over. Kids can never have too many adults who love them and support them throughout their lives, and cheer for every success they achieve," she said.

If you would like the chance to make the world a better place – one child at a time, please consider opening your heart and welcoming a child in need into your home.

Contact Amy Lynn- Appello, Senior Director of Foster Care  
(215) 540-2150, x1243  
AAppello@accessservices.org

## The Men and Women of Tomorrow

"These kids are going to be the men and women of tomorrow. We want to make sure we're raising good, healthy kids with good minds because they're going to run our world and our country, and we want to give them that fresh start." Angela and Umesh who have been foster parents in Bucks County since 2005 have provided 49 children this fresh start.

Angela shares, "Foster care is more than just getting up every day and clothing and feeding the kids. It's understanding what they have been through...the trauma of being separated from a parent is very difficult for a child. You have to be understanding and validate what they're going through." Another bittersweet aspect of foster care is the transition of children out of the home, "It's hard saying goodbye, especially when you put so much of yourself into the children on a daily basis, but it's also a happy experience when they're able to be reunited with their families."

They share that if you're willing to have the patience and understand what this work entails, you will get to see the end result of the kids thriving and doing well. The couple has been able to see many of the children in their care do well. Recently, they were invited to an adoption ceremony for a sibling group they had in their care last year. When they renewed their vows, one of their previous foster children was part of the wedding party. And last year, one of their previous foster children surprised them by pulling up to their home in his car, proudly sharing that he attained his license!

When asked what supports them in their journey as foster parents, they spoke about their experience at Access Services. "It takes a village to raise a child. I couldn't do this without the support of Access Services. We've grown as foster parents because of the support they've given to us." An example of this support is respite care, which provides them the opportunity to create a healthy balance in their life. "It's important to keep our relationship very healthy so that when we come back, we are rejuvenated and can be there for the kids in the way they need us to be there for them."

One of the most remarkable things about Angela and Umesh is their energy and passion for continuing to provide care for years to come, "We're in a happy place as foster parents." They say to prospective foster families, "It really starts with a desire. You will always have the support of case workers if there's something that you don't know."



If you would like to learn more about becoming a foster care provider, please reach out by calling one of our regional offices and request to speak with the Host Family Recruiter.

Michaela Smith, Director of Family Support Programs  
(215) 540-2150, x1160  
MSmith@accessservices.org

## Join Our Team!



### ACCESS SERVICES

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Career Opportunities in Home Care and Human Services.

#### Mental Health and Children & Youth Services

Nancy Nguyen (215) 540-2150, x1365  
NNguyen@accessservices.org

#### IDD and Foster Care Services

Joyce Moeller (610) 866-6667, x1272  
JMoeller@accessservices.org



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