



# update

WINTER 2018

## Creating Futures, Indeed

by Nicole O'Brien

The sun's rays plaster our faces as my coworkers and I stroll into a converted barn that now stands as a carpentry shop in Empire, Michigan. The shop has off white siding with black trim. I am welcomed by an older, hospitable gentleman, "Terry," who heads the shop.

After a few minutes in the shop, I ask Terry what the crew members are doing. He explains they are building missing parts of a "kit house" found on Manitou Island. Kit houses were common 1940 homes, prepackaged to be assembled by their owners.

Buzzing sounds clash in my ears. Parked in the middle of the shop, I look on intently. To my left, crew member Joe Mahon is operating a sander, producing the buzzing sound.

On my right, crew member Patrick is operating what I would later learn is called a planer, producing the noise. A planer trims the edges of wooden boards and gives them a smoother finish. I'm drawn to Patrick in particular. I feel the pride and aspiration that shines in his eyes as he puts boards through the planer, making sure not to trim too much off the edges.

My colleagues and I serve as AmeriCorps members through Child and Family Services (CFS). A mission of YouthWork is to assist children and youth in less fortunate environments. AmeriCorps is best



Mo Denoyer, YouthWork Program Manager, and Nicole O'Brien, YouthWork Member

**YouthWork** began as a pilot program in February 2018 with just 7 youth. The pilot was successful and CFS was awarded an AmeriCorps grant in the summer to continue and build the program, with over 43 youth participating. **YouthWork** allows youth to develop important job skills and experience while exploring their strengths, aptitudes, and interests. The program helps youth and young adults gain an appreciation for the ecosystems that surround them and for the needs of their community. They learn that they have a voice and a stake in the future—their future. Take a moment to hear what Nicole, a **YouthWork** member this past summer, had to say about the program!

described as a domestic Peace Corps. AmeriCorps supports the YouthWork Program by providing funding for our wages and offering us educational grants at the end of each term we serve.

My colleagues are contracted out to various nonprofit organizations and government entities to complete environmental restoration projects throughout the state in crews of 4-5.

*continued on page 2*



Kids grow best in families! Be a foster parent. To learn how, call 231 946 8975.



**Each year 20% of Child and Family Services budget comes from donors like YOU. Child & Family Services has achieved a Gold Star rating in Guidestar, showing our commitment to transparency and accountability. We invite you to visit GuideStar's website to learn more. Thank you for your support!**

continued from page 1

I am power wheelchair-bound due to Cerebral Palsy. As a result, I am unable to meet the physical demands of environmental work. Therefore, I work in the office as a Program Assistant with my own assistant, Billie Jo. I was given the task of observing and interviewing crew members in order to write this excerpt. Knowing many crew members come from less fortunate environments, I expected to witness crew members struggle to take initiative. Still parked in the middle of the shop, watching Patrick put boards through the planer, I think to myself, MAN, WAS I WRONG. At YouthWork, there's an inclusive, positive energy work environment, where disability discrimination, and low morale are nonexistent.

I decided I wanted to try and help Joe paint a window he had sanded. I use a tray for easier access. Quick on their feet, Joe and crew member John, painting one beside him, devised a way to elevate the window so I wouldn't get paint on my tray while painting. John gladly took over as my assistant.

While interviewing my colleagues, one question I asked them is, "Do you have a motto for yourself?" Patrick's response stuck with me:

**"Respect the past, create the future."**

YouthWork creates futures for us, indeed.

## Mark Your Calendar!

Join us to show your support ...

**November**  
National Adoption Month

**November 11-19**  
National Homelessness Awareness Week

**November-December**  
Paper Angels Campaign  
([www.cfsnwmi.org/paperangels](http://www.cfsnwmi.org/paperangels))

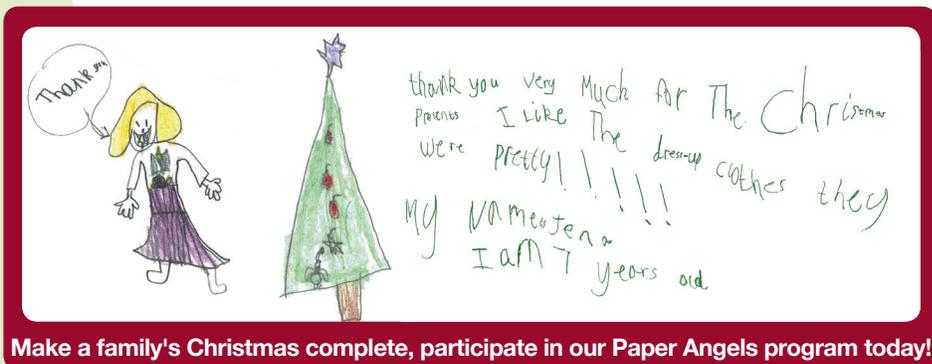
**December 8**  
Paper Angels Drop-Off Day

**January**  
Children's Art Contest ([www.cfsnwmi.org/art](http://www.cfsnwmi.org/art))

**February 2**  
Art Contest Party at Lucky Jack's

**February 8**  
Golden-Fowler Celebrity Dream Room Classic at Golden-Fowler Home Furnishings  
([www.cfsnwmi.org/golden](http://www.cfsnwmi.org/golden))

Thanks to  
Bill Marsh  
Automotive for their  
sponsorship of the  
newsletter



Make a family's Christmas complete, participate in our Paper Angels program today!



## Our Impact

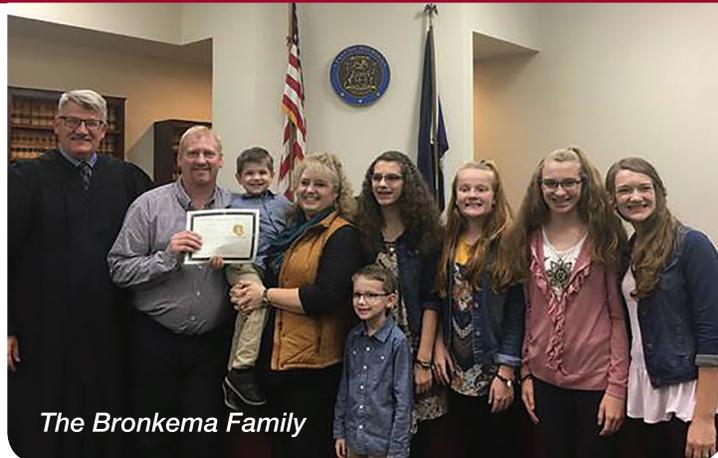
October 1, 2017 - September 30, 2018

- 29,415** contacts fielded through 24/7 Crisis Services
- 2,641** counseling sessions from licensed therapists
- 1686** supervised visits and safe child exchanges
- 493** received free legal advice from volunteer attorneys
- 111** teens received support from caring Youth Services counselors
- 105** children placed with loving foster families
- 45** forever families created through adoption
- 46** teens sheltered at Pete's Place Youth Shelter
- 34** families strengthened with Wraparound Family Preservation
- 35** comprehensive trauma assessments for children
- 40,000** hours of community services performed by YouthWork

# family

## 8 is Great!

Some families were just meant to give, and give, and give to children. That is the Bronkema Family. They just finalized their 6th adoption in Wexford County Family Court! Tamara and Brent have raised three biological adult children, now have six adoptive children, and two foster children. This benevolence has extended to their own children, who feel “it’s nice to have other kids come to live with us because we know that our mom and dad can help them out and give them a nice home.”



*The Bronkema Family*

Their adoption worker, Rhonda Pomeroy, describes their home as full of love and compassion for children and an exceptionally nurturing environment. “The Bronkemas go above and beyond to ensure that all of the children’s unique needs are met.” Rhonda adds. The family enjoys spending time together, camping, taking care of their many animals, going on fishing charters, and playing outside. They were also recognized and awarded by the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) for the 30 Days of Adoption Wishes award which highlights exceptional adoptive families in the month of November.

Thank you to the Bronkema family for opening up your home to children!

**Want to learn more about different ways you can help children and families? Contact us at 231-946-8975 or [cfs@cfs3L.org](mailto:cfs@cfs3L.org).**

## A Real Life Santa Claus

This person holds a special place in our hearts because he sees the needs of our children and families and recognizes his responsibility as a community member and business owner. He becomes the answer in suggesting ways to help us - from actively fundraising on our behalf to being an advocate for our work here at CFS. Mike Mahn, the owner of Golden-Fowler Home Furnishings, is the type of person who will go that extra mile in helping our clients in need. He is always willing to provide assistance with furnishings, whether it be to a youth in a host home or a family ending a stint of homelessness. In addition, he has made a commitment to support our programs with 1% of all mattress sales going to CFS. These are just two examples of the ways Mike partners with our organization. He is also busy planning next year’s Golden-Fowler DreamRoom Classic (February 8, 2019), the goal of which is to bring in over \$40,000 in donations. Mike, your joy of giving makes all of us smile. A big thanks to you and your beautiful wife Brenda for all that you do in our community!



*Mike Mahn*

# thanks

This year we had  
**650 Volunteers**  
and more than  
**7000 hours.**



Harbor Springs Foster Parent Appreciation Picnic

## Volunteers



Sue and Sheila assembling donated items for back-to-school backpacks



Donated graduation gifts to our youth!



Kingsley Club  
Volunteers at Tee Up  
Fore Kids Golf Outing



Volunteer Chef Jen  
at Tee Up Fore Kids  
Golf Outing



State Theatre volunteers



Jim and  
Debbi Dobbyn

TC Magazine's  
UP North  
Home Tour.



Thanks to Old Navy employees for their help  
around CFS!

## OUR MISSION

We strive to ensure the safety and well-being of children, youth, adults, and families in times of crisis, challenge, and life transition.

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## Welcome to the CFS Board, Lauren Pfeil and Patrick Lamb



Lauren brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the CFS board as well as a big heart for children. She was a former board member for Big Brothers/Big Sisters of NW MI. She is an attorney that works locally with children and families as she graduated from law school with a fellowship in the area of child law. On top

of this, she is an adoptive parent of a three year old boy through our agency! Welcome Lauren!



Pat brings a lot of experience in administration and working with youth. He was on the board of trustees for St. Mary's Lake Leelanau School, a coach for Suttons Bay Football team, and he has been the principal at the TBAISD Career Tech Center for the past 9 years. He is a father of three and we are delighted to have Pat a part of the CFS Board. Welcome Pat!