

SPRING/SUMMER, '18

Newsletter



EVOLVE
Adoption & Family Services



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OUR CORE VALUES

- ▶ Child-Focused
- ▶ Collaborative
- ▶ Inclusive
- ▶ Joyful
- ▶ Pioneering
- ▶ Transparent

EVOLVE FACTS

Staff: We employ 30 people split between our Stillwater, Saint Paul and Bloomington offices.

Board: We have six board members.

Clients: We served 340 families, who compiled 2,726.8 training hours, and we served 226 total children. A total of 132 children were placed through our programs.

EVOLVE Springs Forward

From the CEO

Spring is a time of growth and change.

As the grass turns green, the leaves blossom and wild flowers bloom to add colors to our Midwest oasis, EVOLVE Adoption & Family Services is transforming and evolving into new areas — all with the focus of helping children. We continue striving to meet our goal of a world where everyone has nurturing, permanent and supportive familial relationships.

international adoption, but over time we've expanded our services to best meet the various needs of children and families.

We are positioned to thrive, but we continue to need your help. Much of another great year still awaits, and we'd love to have you by our side for it. For it's only together that we can meet our goals of helping children!

*Nicole Deters,
CEO*

But we recognize that we're in a new season, and we've adapted to meet today's challenges. EVOLVE's transformation was on full display in recent months as we celebrated our 40th anniversary last year, culminating with our Ruby Gala celebration last October and our selection as the Nonprofit of the Year by the Greater Stillwater Chamber of Commerce.

In celebrating 40 years, we saw just how far we've come and, perhaps more importantly, just how much growth is ahead. We formed in the 1970s as OURS, which became Crossroads Adoption Services, and HOPE Adoption & Family Services. Both started with an emphasis on



Deters

EVOLVE is Stillwater Nonprofit of the Year

EVOLVE Happenings

EVOLVE Adoption & Family Services received the Nonprofit of the Year Award at the Great Stillwater Chamber of Commerce's Blue Moon Winter Community Awards Celebration at The Heights Hall on Friday, Feb. 9, 2018.

"I'm very proud to be a part of this community and serving children and families," EVOLVE CEO Nicole Deters said.

EVOLVE celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2017 with a chamber ribbon cutting, its Ruby Gala dinner and celebration, and other various events throughout the year.

"They are totally focused on family," said John Ostrowski of Ostrowski Insurance Agency.

Ostrowski praised EVOLVE for its dedication to building a strong community through strong children and families.

"They build on family relationships and relationships with

the community," he said.

Andy Malon of Stillwater Boat Club & Rentals and his wife, Teresa, adopted through EVOLVE and praised it for being organized and professional.

"EVOLVE, I think, makes it manageable, because it's a lot to go over," Andy said.

The couple said EVOLVE is made up of great people who helped them feel comfortable throughout the adoption process.

"I think they are very service oriented, and they do a big service for the community," Teresa said.

Even though adoption can be an overwhelming process, Teresa said EVOLVE guides and helps them make their first steps, which are often the hardest.

"They make a big difference and their work is important, and I think my husband and I are forever grateful," Teresa said.



CEO Nicole Deters (from left), COO Jackie Craig, Development and Communications Director Nancy Lyner, and board members Ashley Ott, Jacqueline Phanthavong and Heather Wicklacz pose for a photo at the Blue Moon Winter Community Awards Celebration at The Heights Hall

EVOLVE'S Vision & Programs

Our Vision: A world where everyone has nurturing, permanent and supportive familial relationships.

Our Mission: We provide a full breadth of inclusive, ethical programming:

ADOPTION:

Since its founding, EVOLVE has helped thousands of children unite with loving families through Domestic Infant Adoption and International Adoption

FOSTER CARE:

EVOLVE offers services for Traditional, Concurrent, and Relative/Kin Foster Care.

FAMILY & YOUTH SERVICES:

EVOLVE provides a variety of services to assist families and youth involved with child protection.

PREGNANCY SERVICES:

EVOLVE offers Pregnancy Counseling, Parenting Support & Education, and a Choosing Adoption program, if desired.

EDUCATION & EVENTS:

EVOLVE hosts a variety of educational and supportive events to promote strong, healthy families.

EVOLVE connects families with free adoption financing help

Services & Programs

When Kelly Ellison and her husband adopted from China in 2007, it didn't just bring the couple a daughter, it presented Ellison with an idea to assist adopting families.

"We need to help families with the financing part of it," she said, describing the idea.

Ellison used her nonprofit experience to start Your Adoption Finance Coach, which helps families navigate adoption financing options like loans, grants and fundraising.

"The families need to know that there are resources out there that are available to them," Ellison said.

That's why EVOLVE Adoption & Family Services partners with Your Adoption Finance Coach, and includes the service as part of EVOLVE's adoption process.

A clear path

Ellison and her team serve as financial planners for adoptions. American Adoptions reports adoptions in the U.S. cost an average of more than \$30,000. Many families don't know the steps they should take — and in what order — to finance an adoption. Adoption paperwork alone can feel like drinking from a fire-hose, Ellison said.

That's where Your Adoption Finance Coach steps in to help chart a path. For example, families need a home study completed before applying for adoption loans and applying for grants.

How Your Adoption Finance Coach helps

Your Adoption Finance Coach helps EVOLVE families create and implement a financing plan. They go through each family's financial picture, because no two adoptions and no two families are alike. They look through income, credit scores, savings, separate adoption savings, and they'll work through what grants, loans and tax credits are available.

Your Adoption Finance Coach promotes all types of fundraising, but only if a family is open to fundraising; not all families are. If they are, the agency helps with special events for an adoption. Families can be surprised at how communities respond to adoption, Ellison said, adding that people often want to be a part of a friend or neighbor's adoption story. A community can come together to be a part of



such an experience.

"It's less about asking and more about letting — letting people be a part of that story," Ellison said.



Kelly Ellison

TESTIMONIALS

"The organizational materials are fantastic!"

"We loved learning about all the different ways of raising money to help fund our adoption!"

What resources are available to EVOLVE adopting families?

As an EVOLVE client, families have free access to one-on-one coaching from Your Adoption Finance Coach, along with many resources.

That includes access to an online video library, webinars and templates. These include budgeting templates, timeline templates, planning documents, and documents with all grants and loans available to families, along with application deadlines.

At the discretion of EVOLVE, Your Adoption Finance Coach offers a 30-minute pre-consult to help families considering adoption and EVOLVE understand the service and how it can benefit them. EVOLVE clients are connected with a coach upon being accepted in the home study process.

Final advice

Though adoption can be a complicated process, Ellison advise adopting families to take in every moment, stopping to savor as much of the experience as possible.

It may feel like a long process, but she said it feels like the blink of an eye looking back.

"It's a decision that they will never regret," she said. "The experience is rich."



EVOLVE bolsters support services for families

EVOLVE Services & Programs

FAMILY & YOUTH SERVICES

EVOLVE Adoption & Family Services isn't strictly an adoption agency.

We focus on the best ways to meet children's needs, and the first choice is keeping a child within his or her biological family. That goal, CEO Nicole Deters has said, requires a breadth of services.

"It is odd, I think, for an adoption agency to be doing family preservation work, foster care work and adoption work where you have a continuum of services for a child, but that's what we should be doing," she said.

In recent years, EVOLVE bolstered its programming to empower families to be a base for children. Many of these changes center in our Family & Youth Services programs.

"For children to grow up and be the best that they can be, a family is a basic need," Deters said.

Senior Programs Manager Jessica Boner said EVOLVE's "wrap-around services" set us apart as an agency in that we strive to help clients in multiple ways.

"Overall, EVOLVE is very excited to be growing these programs and to be able to offer these programs," she said.

Here's a brief outline of some key programming in Family & Youth Services:

Therapeutic Supervised Parenting

One of our newer services aims to address racial disparities in the child protection system — particularly pertaining to the Native American and African American communities— through a Minnesota Department of Human Services grant to serve Hennepin and Ramsey counties. Our team members meet one to three times a week for two hours at a time with families where a child or children have been removed from the home to help address issues and reunite the family.

"The ultimate goal for the parent and child is reunification, that the child can go back with the parent," Boner said.

Other goals include helping the family with parenting skills and providing support to the family, helping them address issues such as: mental health, anxiety, housing and more.

Ideally, a clinical social worker — one with a master's degree in social work — and an intern meet with the family.

Families in the program face many barriers to service, such as: housing, transportation and other concerns pertaining to basic needs.

EVOLVE is working toward ways to help families address these concerns in the future.

Brief Counseling Services and Families First

In these programs, we support a child and family as they enter the child protection system, addressing the issues that brought them to this point. These typically are short-term programs which last about three to four months with intensive and regular in-home visits. We aim to address the crisis and connect the family with support and resources in the community. But one challenge in this program is helping families overcome barriers to resources, whether it's difficulty with transportation or lack of resources within their community. EVOLVE currently provides this service through a contract with Dakota County.

Supportive Services to Foster Care Providers

Our newest program debuted this year with a Dakota County contract. It focuses on licensed foster families that could benefit from therapeutic crisis support in the home.

Through phone consultations and home visits and meetings, EVOLVE workers gather information to assess the situation and then connect the family to resources and assistance in their community.

2017 By the Numbers

19 Children placed via the Domestic Infant Program:

- 3 via EVOLVE programs
- 7 via National programs
- 4 via Own-Source programs
- 2 via designated programs
- 3 in dual programs.

40 Families served in Family Preservation Programs:

48 adults, 77 children

81 Children placed with foster families:

- 56 in Relative Kin families
- 19 in Traditional Foster Care
- 6 in Concurrent Foster Care

37 Women received Pregnancy Services:

- 4 placed for adoption
- 16 inquired about Pregnancy Services
- 16 decided to parent
- 1 was in decision-making process for adoption

32 Children placed via International Adoption:

- 17 via EVOLVE International programs
- 15 via Own-Source programs

15 Children served in Recruitment:

- 6 are in pre-adoptive/adoptive families
- 8 are in foster families
- 1 is in a group home

EVOLVE celebrates volunteers young and old

Kaylee & Lia

Lia and Kaylee Zimmerman were hard at work at EVOLVE Adoption & Family Services' Stillwater office. Kaylee donned gloves and helped her mom pull weeds as Lia helped print EVOLVE's newsletter.

These two girls were adopted through EVOLVE and stopped back to help out after each felt the call to volunteer.

Kaylee, a seventh-grader, enjoys math and playing the violin in orchestra. She showed off her talents on the violin at EVOLVE's 40th anniversary Ruby Gala on Oct. 27, 2017, at the Nicollet Island Pavilion in Minneapolis.



Lia, a high school freshman, enjoys gymnastics and history/social studies.

Volunteers play a key role in helping EVOLVE, a nonprofit dedicated to a world where everyone has nurturing, permanent and supportive family relationships.

Edie & Vern

Edie Hophan is always delighted to learn when a child expresses thanks for the birthday gifts she and her husband, Vern, help pack.

The two have become familiar faces around EVOLVE Adoption & Family Services' Stillwater office. For the past five years, they've volunteered to pack birthday packets for children, and Vern has helped with some maintenance in the past.

The birthday packets they help assemble are mailed to children in our system ages 5, 10 and 15. They contain a small gift for the child and age-appropriate parenting tips along with a schedule of our upcoming parent

support or events.

Edie has told us she "just loves to do mailings!" Whenever we have heard from a child expressing thanks for the

birthday gift, she has been delighted.

Edie and Vern started volunteering for EVOLVE Adoption & Family Services after they saw an ad at the local senior center about five years ago.

Edie said they continue coming back because they feel connected to the people and to the cause.

"I'm impressed with the agency overall," Edie said.

"I've learned a lot," she added.

EVOLVE is grateful for Edie and Vern, along with all of our volunteers!



2017 HIGHLIGHTS

May 16: We hosted the seventh annual Families FORE Kids Golf Tournament and Dinner at Hillcrest Country Club.

June 2-4: UMOJA MN is held at St. Catherine's University to assist and empower transracial families.

July-August: We highlighted our partnership with Babies Need Boxes to help ensure our families and neighbors utilize safe infant sleeping practices.

August 19: 2 Legit 2 Kick won the annual Kickball 4 A Cause event at Lucy Winton Bell Athletic Complex. Eight teams competed.

September: Staffers Whitney Ryan and Lyla Omernik traveled to the Philippines for the 14th Philippine Global Consultation on Child Welfare Services in Manila.

September 9: We hosted a picnic for foster care children and families at Cliff Fen Park in Burnsville.

October 27: We celebrated 40 years with our Ruby Gala at the Nicollet Island Pavilion. The fund-a-need alone raised nearly \$18,000 — far surpassing the \$10,000 goal — and the live auction raised \$5,500.

November 20: The Greater Stillwater Chamber of Commerce helped us celebrate our 40th anniversary with a ribbon cutting at our Oak Park Heights office.

December 5: Our families got to mingle with the playoff-bound Minnesota Vikings at the team's Winter Park practice site during the annual Family Fun Fest.

December 8: Families that have adopted from the Philippines through EVOLVE came together for a visit by the Philippines Inter-Country Adoption Board.

EVOLVE Upcoming Events

June 15-17, 2018



at St. Catherine's University in St. Paul, MN

Sometimes called an adoption heritage camp, UMOJA MN and UMOJA INC. empower transracial families (primarily families with black children and parents of another culture) to raise children who will have a positive black identity, be able to talk about race in an honest and open way, feel comfortable in all different cultures and handle basic skin and hair care. We do that by providing a powerful weekend experience for the entire family, which will include child programming, adult learning opportunities, age appropriate breakout sessions and large group cultural celebrations. <http://evolveservices.org/umoja-mn/>



The eighth Families FORE Kids Golf Tournament will be at The Royal Club in Lake Elmo, a brand new course "designed by Annika Sorenstam, Arnold Palmer and Mother Nature," on June 25. The tournament offers a place for skilled and competitive golfers to shine, as this will be the second year of a traveling trophy for best the best four-person team. But this "best ball" tourney is great for golfers who just want to have fun. The tournament also includes lunch, games, dinner and a program. <http://evolveservices.org/families-fore-kids-2018/>



We're ready to kick up support for the Anne McManus Fund. EVOLVE's Next Generation Leaders organize the kickball tourney to support the fund, which provides supplemental needs for kids in foster care.

<https://form.jotform.com/80384637014960>

EVOLVE

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WHAT'S INSIDE



**EVOLVE is Stillwater's
Nonprofit of the Year**



**EVOLVE connects families
with adoption finance coach**



EVOLVE
Adoption & Family Services



Upcoming events:
UMOJA MN, Families FORE Kids,
Kickball 4 A Cause

**We celebrate our
volunteers!**

