

# Why Hillcrest?

In this issue of "Hillcrest Calling," we will share an overview of several, but certainly not all, of our programs and services. The theme of this issue is "Why Hillcrest?" By highlighting programs which are core to our mission, we hope to provide some answers to the question. Why does Hillcrest provide these programs? Why does Hillcrest reach out to families and children through these services?

## Adoption Services

One of the services with the longest history at Hillcrest Family Services is the Adoption Program. After Dr. Nancy Hill created the Baby Fold more than 100 years ago, her work is carried on today for both domestic and international adoptions.

Melissa Anderson is the Adoption Coordinator for the program, housed in Cedar Rapids. She and the other staff members provide adoption services to much of the state of Iowa. As a Licensed Master Level Social Worker, she works closely with both birth parent(s) and adoptive parent(s).

"We facilitate domestic, international and special needs adoptions from start to finish. We also work closely with the Department of Human Services and other adopting/placing agencies throughout the process."

"We conduct home studies and provide pre- and post-placement services (depending on the type of adoption) such as visiting the home after the child has been placed to see if the adjustment and bonding is going smoothly," Melissa says. On average, the process takes two to four months for the home study, and then the average wait for an infant, once approved, is one to three years.

The need for adoptive families is great right now. In the last 18 months, Melissa notes that she and her staff have been networking with area hospitals and clinics to provide infant adoption awareness training to nurses and social workers. This nationwide training program, which Hillcrest Family Services participates in, helps professionals feel more comfortable about discussing adoption as an option for women who are facing an unwanted or unintended pregnancy. This networking has caused an increase in referrals from pregnant women wishing to give their babies up for adoption.

**Why Hillcrest?** "Our mission is to take the best interests of all parties – the baby, the prospective adoptive individual or couple, as well as the birth mother and birth family. We empower the birth family and the adoptive family to create their own plan that is comfortable for a lifetime, a plan that best fits their lifestyle and family needs."

"We're not doing this for the money. We're doing it to serve the families. We want to help families who are not prepared to have a family or who cannot have their own family. We want to bring them together in a beautiful way."

## Big Brothers Big Sisters

A national organization with a strong local presence, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Iowa (BBBS) has been a program of Hillcrest Family Services since 1997, and became an affiliate of the national organization in 2000. Anne Hedrick is the program coordinator, and works with three other staff members to deliver the mentoring program in Dubuque, Clayton and Jackson counties.

Anne says that BBBS is comprised of two programs: community-based and school-based mentoring. "The programs match volunteers with children between the ages of five and 15. Couples match with one or two children," she notes.

Children are referred to BBBS by their parents, teachers and occasionally through the Department of Human Services and Juvenile Court Services. Typically, the children need a positive adult role model in their lives who will help them develop relationships, improve their communication skills, increase self-esteem and work through personal or academic difficulties.

Community-based mentoring takes place after school hours and on weekends at locations determined by the pair. The Big and Little meet once every other week for a couple of hours, for at least a year. The pair determine the activities they want to share, such



as going for walks, fishing, biking, working on the computer, crafts, attending community events and participating in events the Little is involved in through school. The volunteers are 18 and older. Currently there are 100 community-based matches.

School-based mentoring takes place during the school day at the school location. Many of the volunteers are high school students who meet with younger children on a weekly basis. Students in Garnavillo, Guttenberg, Bellevue, Peosta and the Western Dubuque school system participate in school-based mentoring.

For the volunteer Bigs, the rewards of the program include sharing their talents and time with a child who needs a positive adult role model, getting involved in their community and giving back, and providing the Little the potential for personal growth and opportunities they may not experience otherwise.

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In our last issue, we noted that there were 61 different children under Baby Fold care from November 1941 to November 1942. The average length of time each child remained at the Baby Fold was just over a year. Each child at Hillcrest was entered for his parents' individual reasons. Many children were placed in the home for a temporary period (perhaps sickness of a parent or the necessity for both parents to work). Other babies were left for adoption as in the story about Alice on page four. (This was an excerpt from a Community Chest report in 1942.)

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515 6th Ave. S., Washington, IA 52353

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515 6th Ave. S., Clinton, IA 52732

Right now, there are over 20 boys and 12 girls in the community program who are waiting for a Big Brother or Sister.

**Why Hillcrest?** Anne quickly notes that “our mission statements parallel one another in our focus on families and children, and providing resources and opportunities for successful futures. The success of BBBS is apparent because of its consistent growth since the program began. Hillcrest has a long-standing history in the community and this contributes to the growth and success of BBBS as well. Volunteers feel a natural connection to two good organizations.”



*“This has absolutely been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life and I really appreciate this opportunity.”*  
– A Big

*“We hang out and (Big) helps me with school work. Mostly she just listens and helps me deal with all the stuff going on in my life. I can tell her anything.”*  
– A Little

### **Cedar Rapids Counseling Program**

“After life and health, a person’s most precious possession is his or her story. I have the opportunity and privilege of hearing peoples’ stories and helping them alleviate their pain, bring about change and continue their growth.”

Aptly put by the man who serves as Cedar Rapids’ only outpatient counselor, Bruce Williams is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and a Licensed Master Social Worker, as well as an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. He is located in the Hillcrest offices at 4080 First Avenue NE.

Bruce carries out the mission of Hillcrest Family Services through his work with adults, couples and families. He sees them for a range of counseling topics, including depression and anxiety, relational conflicts, communication breakdowns, grief, parent/child disagreements, abuse and domestic violence issues. Some clients may meet with him briefly, while others may be involved in long-term counseling, which is determined by their needs. He has been with Hillcrest Family Services since 1985, and the Counseling Program has been in existence since at least the 1970s.

**Why Hillcrest?** “Some of our clients come to us through referrals from other professionals who know we offer quality care with a sliding fee scale. Additionally, referrals come to us from other clients who have had a meaningful experience at Hillcrest, so they recommend us to their family members and friends.”

“Dr. Nancy Hill, the founder of Hillcrest, left a legacy of courageous caring, as she reached out to a population needing support. That is still alive today. So, our clients may feel a sense of comfort about our longevity and history since we have served eastern Iowa for more than 100 years. Clients may find reassurance in knowing that Hillcrest Family Services is stable and can provide such care with continuity.”

“Finally, clients may find comfort from our size. We are large enough to have the resources to be effective and yet small enough to provide personal, respectful services,” Bruce notes.

*Gary L. Gansemer, LISW*

“Hillcrest Calling” has been the name of the Hillcrest Family Services newsletter for as long as I can remember. I started receiving copies back in the 70’s and the name has been with us during that entire time. Before the name change, our monthly newsletter was called “Crib Sheet”. I presume the name changed when Hillcrest started to grow and provide more services than the Baby Fold.

What does “Hillcrest Calling” really mean? For many, the name stands for Hillcrest calling them, via this printed newsletter, to know what we are doing throughout our many service areas. For us, it is a call to volunteers and donors to ask for help in a monetary, time, talent, or prayerful manner. For others, it is a vehicle to recognize those who have helped Hillcrest, by calling out their names and honoring the sacrifices of so many.

Most of all, I believe that “Hillcrest Calling” represents the voices of those who call out to Hillcrest for help. Since 1896, we have been responding to those calls for help. Our history – and the present time – reflect calls from individuals, organizations, governmental bodies and churches for help. I am certain that the increase in the calls which resulted in the growth of Hillcrest beyond the Baby Fold made the leaders of that time think it was best to change the name of the newsletter.

With all of the calls we are making and receiving this year, it is hard to believe that there was ever a busier time for Hillcrest. Yet I thought that very thing five, ten, even eighteen years ago. Just when I think the pace can’t get any faster, we find another gear to shift into. This issue of “Hillcrest Calling” contains many examples of the programs we offer and those gears we shift into. We are calling you with much information and once again asking for your help in carrying out our mission, our calling.

My favorite hymn is “Here I Am, Lord”. In the verses of this beautiful song, the Lord asks, “Whom shall I send?” The refrain comes from those who are called, who say, “Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard You calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if You lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.”

What fitting words for everyone connected to Hillcrest Family Services! Each and every time a call comes to Hillcrest with a request for help, we ask ourselves the question, “Is it I, Lord?” How can we answer that call and help those in need?

Each time we make a call to you and our many faithful supporters, we ask you to answer that call. How can you help Hillcrest and those who are served by our many programs and our caring staff? Your time, talent and treasures are part of our past, present and future. Please consider how you can answer when Hillcrest is Calling.



During the Dubuque County Fair in July, Simoniz Car Wash held a fundraiser for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Iowa. Full-service car washes were given away for a \$1 donation!

Simoniz raised **\$2,811.90** for the program. **THANK YOU!** If you are interested in a full-service car wash, you can purchase them from Hillcrest Family Services for just \$3.00 each, and all proceeds will continue to benefit the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program.

### Use a Search Engine and BBBS Wins

As another option for Internet search engines, consider **Goodsearch.com**. Just like using Yahoo.com or MSN.com for your online searches, you can use this tool. The benefit to Hillcrest Family Services is that when you use this search engine, and type in Big Brothers in the charity section, a drop-down box will appear. You can then choose Big Brothers Big Sisters-Eastern Iowa (Dubuque). For every search you perform, one penny will be donated to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Iowa. It's an easy way to help!

### Highland Place

Adults with mental illness are served around the clock at Highland Place, a 69-bed facility located at 13011 120th Avenue in Ottumwa, Iowa.

Deb Lang, a Licensed Social Worker, is the Highland Place Administrator. Sue McDaniel, a Licensed Registered Nurse, is the Assistant Administrator. Along with a staff of 40 employees, their mission is to provide care and rehabilitation for chronically mentally ill adults, age 18 and older.

In a comfortable rural setting outside Ottumwa, Highland Place is really two separate units within one facility which provide a continuum of care: a Persons with Mental Illness (PMI) facility; and a Residential Care Facility (RCF).

Most clients come to Highland Place needing a higher level of care (PMI), which requires a higher staff-to-client ratio. Most are acutely mentally ill. "We work to stabilize them by helping them understand their mental illness and how to cope. We also help clients with medication management, money management, coping skills, time management, hygiene and self-care issues, and relapse prevention. These are skills clients have lost or need to re-learn due to their mental illness."

"When they are ready, we move them to the RCF level of care, where we concentrate on preparing them for community living. This involves many hours of relapse prevention and setting them up with service providers who will follow them into the community once they are discharged from Highland Place," Deb notes.

**Why Hillcrest?** Deb is clear and direct in her answer to this question. "Hillcrest Family Services operates a facility like Highland Place because that is what we do. We reach out to people who need help, and assist them in gaining greater control over their lives. We help stabilize them and rehabilitate them to make a healthy transition back into community life. It just makes sense. We help families. We help individuals in need. It's what we should do."

### Transitional Housing

Betty Simon lives the mission of the Hillcrest Transitional Housing Program. Literally. As the program's counselor, she lives in the building at 1995 Asbury Road in Dubuque and works daily with the residents of the four apartments which are home to families in need.

"Our mission is to provide safe, affordable, temporary, supported housing for homeless families so that they may develop skills in order to become permanently self-sufficient," she says.

Betty works daily with the families to discuss their obstacles, help them set goals and make progress toward self-sufficiency. She also works with other agencies and providers to make connections for medical help, emergency food, clothing, educational resources and transportation.

Residents must meet both Hillcrest and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) criteria to be admitted to the program. They can stay a maximum of 24 months as long as they are making progress toward their personal goals. Hillcrest pays for the first 30 days of rent, and then the families must contribute, based on their income and ability to pay. The program was launched in 2003.

Currently there are 30-40 family names on the waiting list. Homeless families who become aware of the program will call Betty directly to enroll. Others are referred by schools and the Department of Human Services.

**Why Hillcrest?** Betty notes that "we are the only program in a 100-mile radius who works with families where the father and/or teenaged boys are involved. All the other shelters in this area will not take husbands, or single fathers with children, or mothers with boys who are older than 12. Also, we are unique in that we provide comprehensive, daily support to help the family members focus on the future, set their goals, and get the resources they need to move forward. That's what Hillcrest is about."

## In Memory of:

Marietta Brocka David and Kathryn Alden Dougherty, IA	Marietta Brocka Jerry and Martha Koch Sheffield, IA
Marietta Brocka Anonymous	Marietta Brocka Roger and Jean Kolbet New Hampton, IA
Marietta Brocka Dennis and Kristen Bean Ainsworth, IA	Marietta Brocka John and Meta Lage Sheffield, IA
Marietta Brocka Gaylen and Betty Brocka Waterloo, IA	Marjorie Cloyd David and Karen Lull Dubuque, IA
Marietta Brocka Marie Card Eilderts Hampton, IA	Mary Sage Irene Morgan Cedar Falls, IA
Our Mothers Reuben and Phyllis Core Carlisle, IA	Marietta Brocka Jean Palmer Mason City, IA
Fannie Hoffman Dick and Beverly Gerdis Titonka, IA	Charles Pfitzenmaier Phyllis Pfitzenmaier Bettendorf, IA
Robert Boekelman Dick and Beverly Gerdis Titonka, IA	Linda Kay Hicks Laura Plambeck Des Moines, IA
Merle Gieskig Dick and Beverly Gerdis Titonka, IA	Marietta Brocka Kevin and Julie Pals Clear Lake, IA
Mary Jo Holubar Dick and Beverly Gerdis Titonka, IA	Clair Munson Lois, Kim and Bill Stuedemann Kalamazoo, MI
(Sisters) Lena Mae and Marie Dick and Beverly Gerdis Titonka, IA	Marietta Brocka Ronald and Colleen Wessels Parkersburg, IA
Ben and Gertrude DeBerg Beverly Hempen Aplington, IA	

## In Honor of:

Their three children Gene and Carlene Adams Monticello, IA	Tessera Marie Rippentrop's birth David and Karen Lull Dubuque, IA
Harold Barkley on his 80th birthday Bob and Linda Benton Carlisle, IA	

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## Abstinence Program

Talking about sex, sexually transmitted diseases and saving oneself for marriage are pretty heavy topics, especially for area eighth graders and high school students who receive Hillcrest Family Services' Abstinence program from health educator Mindy Sampson. But the message is clear and the program is growing.

"We began in 2002 by working with local groups who identified the need for providing abstinence education to our youth," says Mindy. "We created this program locally and receive some funding from federal grants. I work with an advisory board comprised of representatives from Catholic Charities, the Dubuque Community School District, Dubuque County Right to Life, the Visiting Nurses Association and the Finley Hospital. We meet monthly to discuss needs and develop programming that hits home with our area youth," she notes.

Mindy makes presentations in schools upon the request of teachers in Dubuque, Delaware and Jones counties. Her goal is to share information that will get students to talk to each other. "I don't lecture them when I go into a school. Instead, I share information and then we have activities that encourage the students to talk to each other and share their thoughts about abstinence. I really focus on the safety aspects of abstinence and how to avoid difficult health situations and emotional situations that students this age are not prepared to deal with," she says.

**Why Hillcrest?** "The Abstinence Program is a perfect fit with the Hillcrest Family Services Clinic. We are focused on healthy relationships and making good choices for the future. When we can carry that message to students, we hope they will open up the lines of communication with other teens, and support each other in their decisions about relationships and abstinence," Mindy says.

## Charitable Rollovers and Hillcrest

If you are 70 1/2 or older, you can directly transfer IRA distributions to qualified charitable organizations like Hillcrest. They can be made directly to Hillcrest or made to our endowment account at the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque. Distributions up to \$100,000 per year will not generate taxable income nor a tax deduction, so even those who do not itemize their tax returns receive the benefit.

This is a great opportunity if you are required to withdraw minimum distributions from your IRA and you do not need the money for personal use. The money now can be used to further the ministry of Hillcrest. If the gift is directed to the Hillcrest Endowment at the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, the gift will qualify for a 20% Endow Iowa tax credit.

Contact Gary Gansemer or your tax advisor to see how to take advantage of this offer before December 31, 2006.



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*A Difference In The Lives That Follow*

## Alice

Alice and her fifteen month old brother first came to the Baby Fold when their mother died at Alice's birth. The children's health was excellent, as was their social history. The parents were high school graduates, had bought their own home and the father was progressing in his work.

Eight months after the death of his first wife, the father came to take his children back to their old home, but to a new mother. From the beginning, the children were a burden to this strange woman. The neighbors complained to the police of the treatment the children received at her hands, and social workers were sent to help her try to meet her new responsibilities. They found the new wife a shallow, self-adoring person who wanted her own life unhampered by her husband's children.

The father, coming home from his work, day after day and finding quarrels and bitterness there, began to slip backward until his health was undermined by constant worry. In this run-down condition he contracted pneumonia and died.

The children, under-nourished and frightened little things by now, aged three and four, were returned to the Baby Fold, this time for adoption. After their health was built up, parents were found for them among the fine applications on file at Hillcrest. The children are now strong and laughing, growing up together in a well-adjusted house and giving happiness to people who love them as their own babies.

*—taken from a 1942 Community Chest report*