

# STORIES OF STRENGTH

BIG BEND COMMUNITY BASED CARE ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019





# FROM THE DESK OF MIKE WATKINS ▼

On behalf of the Board of Directors and our dedicated staff, we are proud to present a particularly heartfelt annual report, Stories of Strength. The 2018-2019 year was filled with challenges and triumphs which we will feature throughout this report.

Hurricane Michael made landfall in Mexico Beach as a category 5 storm on October 10, 2018, altering our community forever. Most of our year was spent working to mitigate the fallout from the storm for the families we serve, our providers, and our staff. There is a long road ahead, but the aftermath of this storm has shown us how strong our community is.

We also had a number of amazing foster and adoption stories this year, some of which we will share here. We celebrated the licensing of our 100th foster home in Circuit 2, yet another demonstration of the strength of our community and our ability to come together to help those in need.

There are countless stories we wish we could have told here, but we have selected some of our favorites from the past year to share with you, our friends and colleagues. These are stories of perseverance, stories of dedication, and stories of strength.

We would also like to take this chance to thank our amazing network of providers and our steadfast partners at the Department of Children and Families. The work we do would not be possible without this dedicated group.

On behalf of our entire team, we remain grateful to serve the people of the Big Bend and we are excited to see what the 2019-2020 year will hold for us.



*Mike Watkins*



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS ▼

From The Desk of Mike Watkins .....	2	Heart Gallery .....	16
Board of Directors/Table of Contents .....	3	Spotlight: Trice Family.....	17
Financial Update .....	4	Exceeding Adoption Goals.....	18
Foster Parent Recruitment Update .....	5	Spotlight: Bay Christmas Adoptions .....	19
Stories of Strength Spread .....	6	FIT Success Story Follow-Up.....	20
Panama City Donation Drive .....	8	Community Engagement .....	21
Project HOPE .....	9	Mobile Response Teams.....	22
Spotlight: Wheelis Family.....	10	CAT Teams.....	23
Spotlight: Adams Family.....	11	Looking Towards 2019-2020 .....	24
Spotlight: Ali Jones .....	12	Community Partners .....	25
Spotlight: Sloan & Angela Holloman .....	13	Community Doners.....	26
Spotlight: Ann Wing.....	14	Service Centers .....	27

# FINANCIAL UPDATE ▼

BBCBC operated the 2018-2019 year with a budget of approximately \$113 million, an increase of approximately \$15 million from the 2017-2018 year. BBCBC was significantly impacted by Hurricane Michael which made landfall and impacted many of the 18 counties in BBCBC's system of care; however, BBCBC continued to focus on the most effective and efficient administration of funds to ensure the accomplishment of its vision and mission.

As a result of the impact of Hurricane Michael, the 2018-2019 year posed many challenges from both a business and financial perspective. Due to the storm, BBCBC experienced damage to the system of care in its 18 county service area and significant damage to many of its portfolio of real property assets, including significant roof damage to the service centers in Washington County and Jackson County, as well as catastrophic damage to the Bay County Service Center located in Panama City, Florida. Following the storm, BBCBC began the process of immediately performing emergency mitigation from both a system of care and real property asset perspective. BBCBC heads into the 2019-2020 year continuing to navigate many changes to its system of care as well as embarking on repair and reconstruction to real property assets,

funded through a combination of federal, state, insurance, and FEMA means. The real property asset damage is anticipated to be greater than \$8 million, which represents more than 50% of BBCBC real property assets.

During 2018-2019 BBCBC applied for and was awarded approximately \$577,000 in Department of Children and Families Risk Pool funding to offset the significant increase in out-of-home care costs. BBCBC anticipates applying for the risk pool during the 2019-2020 fiscal year, as out of home care costs continue to increase as a result of a significant rise in the number of children entering care.

BBCBC continues to provide fiscal accountability through the presentation of bi-monthly financial statements to its Board of Directors. Fiscal operating plans are reviewed by the finance committee and then forwarded to the full board for approval. An annual audit committee of the board of directors reviews the results of the Independent Auditors' Audit Report. James Moore & Co., P.L. serves as the independent auditor of BBCBC and issued an unmodified opinion on the most recent audited financial statements.

## 2018 - 2019 EXPENSES



*“Even with the traumatic impact of Hurricane Michael, BBCBC continues to maintain reasonable administrative service expenses, while once again continuing to have many contractual mandates without additional administrative service funding, allowing us to invest more in the communities we serve.”*

*—Lori Gulledge, BBCBC Chief Financial Officer*



# FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT UPDATE ▼

## **CIRCUIT 2:**

**On July 1, 2018, BBCBC brought the management of foster homes in Circuit 2 in-house and hired a team led by Molly Clore to recruit, license, and support foster families.**

With an emphasis on the value of lived experience, Clore hired a team of foster parents, adoptive parents, and social workers and they immediately implemented 24 hours a day, 7 days a week support for foster families.

The program partnered with the local Tallahassee Area Foster and Adoptive Parent Association to provide trainings and childcare for their monthly meetings. In early 2019, local BBCBC foster families started Foster Florida Tallahassee to help assist foster families with material needs, babysitting, and spiritual support.

By June 30, 2019 the program celebrated surpassing 100 licensed families and is expecting continued growth! This growth in homes, increase in birth parent/foster parent partnerships, and enhanced training for foster families has brought fewer placement moves, improved outcomes related to sibling separations, and overall increased satisfaction in the foster parent community.

## **CIRCUIT 14:**

**On October 10, 2018 the foster homes in C14 were battered by Hurricane Michael.** We immediately lost a handful of families who had to relocate for their jobs. In addition, 12 foster families' homes were unlivable after the storm. Throughout the course of the next 9 months, these families miraculously were able to maintain the children that were placed with them before the storm. The families worked diligently to make the necessary repairs on their homes while continuing to ensure that the foster children in their care felt safe and loved through it all.

We are amazed at the tenacity of our families to keep going in the face of so much opposition! We are proud to say that we ended up with more families at the end of the year despite having a Category 5 hurricane directly hit our service area. We are so thankful for each of the grant donations that were directed our way as well as all of the generous community donations that flooded in to aide in our immediate recovery phase. We appreciate all of you for the support, love, and prayers for a speedy recovery.





An aerial photograph showing a residential area with significant damage. Many trees are bare and skeletal, and several houses have roofs that are partially covered with blue tarps. The sky is overcast. The text 'STORI STREI' is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif font, with the 'O' in 'STORI' being a stylized, circular shape.

# STORI STREI



An aerial photograph of a school campus after a disaster. The main building is a long, single-story structure with a blue metal roof. The surrounding area shows signs of destruction, with many trees stripped of leaves and debris scattered on the ground. A parking lot with a red dumpster is visible in the foreground. Large, white, 3D-style text is overlaid on the image, reading "EYES OF" on the top line and "NGTH" on the bottom line, with the letter "S" being significantly larger than the others.

# EYES OF NGTH



# PANAMA CITY DONATION DRIVE

In the wake of Hurricane Michael, Harley-Davidson of Panama City Beach was generous enough to offer BBCBC space in their parking lot to set up a new command station for staff to work from after many buildings where BBCBC and their providers operated were destroyed, including BBCBC's headquarters in Bay County. This temporary headquarters included a camper full of supplies that provided internet access and a place for everyone to charge their phones, and teams of staff worked from picnic tables until a permanent workplace could be secured.

On Halloween, BBCBC and its local providers held a donation drive for foster families in the area, all of whom had been impacted by the storm, on the Harley-Davidson property. Each family received a cooler full of ice and food, gift cards for gasoline, boxed dry goods, and fresh fruit. There was also bug spray, soap, cleaning supplies, and diapers available for any family that needed them. All of the supplies were donated from organizations and families across the state.

This event allowed local foster parents to come together and receive much-needed material supplies and emotional support from one another. As further evidence of all of our foster families' selflessness, these families never wavered in providing a loving and safe environment for their foster children, even in the aftermath of a Category 5 hurricane.



# PROJECT HOPE



Just like Hurricane Michael, recovery follows its own path.  
Project H.O.P.E was designed for Helping Our People in Emergencies.

Project H.O.P.E is a Crisis Counseling Program provided through the coordination and oversight of Big Bend Community Based Care and funded by FEMA. It is active in nine (9) counties served by BBCBC. Big Bend has contracted with Life Management Center and Apalachee Center to provide the services. Since its inception in October 2018, the program has served 50,826 people. This program is temporary and is anticipated to phase out in February 2020.

Project H.O.P.E engages survivors of Hurricane Michael by listening to their stories and helping them identify their inner strengths and resiliency, lean on their existing support network, and navigate community resources to support their recovery.

We go to people dealing with the aftermath of the storm and provide free, confidential services anywhere, including homes, businesses, schools, colleges, houses of worship, shelters, and Community Centers, for anyone affected by Hurricane Michael.

We help through individual outreach, Informational and Educational Support, Community Support Group Development, Community Networking, and Support Resource Linkage Assessment and Referral.

*Recovery from a disaster takes **TIME** and looks **DIFFERENT** for everyone, but **EVERYONE** has a hurricane story and their story **MATTERS.***



# SPOTLIGHT ▶

## THE WHEELIS FAMILY

**Mary and Jesse Wheelis became foster parents in December of 2018.** Only a few days before Christmas, they agreed to care for a 9-year-old, medically-fragile child named K. K had been in the hospital off and on her entire life and was receiving dialysis three days a week. Many families might have been afraid of dietary restrictions and visits to Jacksonville 3-4 days a week for medical treatment, but not Mary and Jesse! Mary traveled to the hospital to learn how to properly care for K and dedicated her free time to creating custom menus to meet her medically-required nutritional needs.

A few months later, K now says that her favorite meal is Mary's homemade egg rolls! In an effort to make K's life as normal as possible, they advocated on K's behalf so she could attend school three days a week full-time and two days a week part-time.



We are excited to report that K's health has improved so much that she is now on the kidney transplant list awaiting that important call! Mary, Jessie, and K can often be found riding their bicycles and hover boards around their neighborhood or supporting other foster families with special meals and sweet treats! The Wheelis family is a constant encouragement to the Big Bend Foster Family Support Team and true examples of perseverance and selflessness.

*“K had been in the hospital off and on her entire life and was receiving dialysis three days a week.”*

*“We are excited to report that K's health has improved so much that she is now on the kidney transplant list awaiting that important call!”*



# SPOTLIGHT ▶

## THE ADAMS FAMILY



When Brian and Scout Adams became foster parents in December of 2013, they had no idea the journey that they were about to take. They received their first foster placement the next month and soon after, Scout gave birth to their first biological child. Since that time, they have had over twenty children enter their home. Scout and Brian ensure that each child they care for is loved, happy, and secure.

Their first foster child quickly stole their hearts. He started learning, growing, and quickly became a loving child. Though they hoped to adopt him, a relative stepped up and Brian and Scout helped the child with a smooth transition into the home of his uncle—one of the hardest things they have ever done.

A few months later, another foster child came to their home. He was a handful, but they loved him unconditionally. In March of 2015, he became the first of many children they would adopt.

Later that year, the parents took in a teenager named Noah. Noah had faced many challenges, but Scout and Brian were determined to help this young man. Brian and Scout adopted Noah on National Adoption Day 2015.

Then, in April of 2018, Scout and Brian were made aware of two young boys who had been in and out of the system for the previous 9 years. The parents felt a calling. In August of 2018 the two boys moved into Brian and Scout's home.

When Hurricane Michael hit in October of 2018, Brian and Scout had eight children in their home: 1 biological child, 2 adoptive children, 3 foster children, and the 2 children they were waiting to adopt.

They shared their large home as a refuge for many friends and families to come and have a shower. The family served three meals a day for all those who came to their home. Once the family started to get out in the community, they tried to help others who had faced more damage. The children were eager to help through all of this.

Time passed and Brian and Scout finally adopted the boys on November 15, 2018.

Brian and Scout would later meet the other sibling group that had been in the group home with their two newly adopted boys and would decide to adopt them as well—their fifth and sixth adopted children. Now pregnant with their second biological child, the family has a bustling and loving home with 8 kids.

*“It takes a village to work with children in the foster care system.”*

*Brian Adams*

# SPOTLIGHT ▶

## ALI JONES

**I became licensed as a respite foster parent in March 2019.** I was relatively familiar with the child welfare system from working in the public policy arena focusing on children's issues. However, I never knew much about the critical need for foster parents or supports for those in the foster care system. Plus, I always discredited myself because I was single - I definitely couldn't be a foster parent!

One day, my mom, who is a special education teacher in Tallahassee, was contacted because one of her students was being removed from his home and case workers were desperately trying to find a placement for him. That's when I first heard of the term "respite." I had no clue that temporary, short-term foster care was an option! I got in touch with BBCBC to ask more questions, and the next thing I knew, I was sitting in a QPT class.

People always ask how or why I got into this, and it's pretty simple. Once I heard the stories, once I realized that these things are happening in MY community, that children in MY hometown were

sitting in an office at 11:00 at night because they were removed from their parents but had no home to go to, I couldn't unhear it and I couldn't unsee it. How can I sit in my three-bedroom house alone with my dog watching Netflix when there are kids down the road wondering where they will lay their head tonight?

So, I decided I would do something about it. Maybe I can't commit to full-time fostering. I'm 25, single, and working to build my career which includes a lot of travel right now. But I like to say that everyone can do something. Some have talents, some have money, some have time, etc. My something is providing a temporary home for foster children. My something is a safe home, lots of love, and a cute, snuggly puppy.

I completed the QPT class, home studies, background checks, fingerprinting, etc. and finally received my license. Friends rallied around me and gave me hand-me-downs, but nothing truly prepares you for the first call. My first placement call came on a Friday night when I was out on a first date. I said yes, and at 11:30 that night a 5-week-old baby boy showed up on my doorstep. I didn't sleep at all, and we both shed some tears that night, but my first placement will always be special.

Since that sweet boy, I've had 6 other children live in my home. I've given a child her first Easter basket, been called 'mama' for the first time, learned how

to do ethnic hair (after hours of practicing), driven countless miles to child care, stayed awake praying that the child feels safe and loved in my home, read lots of night time stories, checked the closet for monsters, cut the hospital bracelet off a child, and seen so much brokenness but even more beauty and joy. There is so much beauty in the community that comes together to support a new placement. In a baby's first smile. The sound of the sweet, little voice calling out 'mama.' This is why I'll keep answering the calls and keep saying yes.





# SPOTLIGHT ▶ **SLOAN & ANGELA HOLLOMAN**

**Big Bend foster parents Sloan and Angela Holloman have tenacity, energy, and a zest for life that is contagious.**

Sloan and Angela have each been serving as medical foster parents for well over a decade, Angela fostering 8 children over the years and Sloan fostering 15.

“We have so many wonderful stories [about fostering], I don’t think you could even put it in an article,” Angela said emphatically. “Sloan is so passionate, I’m focused and steady. So when we come together, we encourage each other to keep moving on.”

As single foster parents, they said that it’s easy to get overwhelmed. “But we wake up every morning bouncing ideas off of each other. We



organize vacations we think the kids would love. We find crafts and activities we think the kids would like to do.”

When asked about the most rewarding part of being a foster parent, Angela said, “When I see a child start to thrive, I realize the difference we make with love and safety. When a child feels safe and loved there is absolutely nothing they can’t do.” Sloan agreed and said, “Giving that child an opportunity to blossom and grow is so rewarding. Children want to feel like they belong.”

The women both say that fostering is a calling and a privilege. Angela said, “People will say to us, ‘You guys are so awesome.’ But I just think, ‘I love children. I’m not doing anything special, I’m just taking care of these kids. I’m just a mom.’”

*“When I see a child start to thrive, I realize the difference we make with love and safety. When a child feels safe and loved there is absolutely nothing they can’t do.”*

## SPOTLIGHT ▶ ANN WING

**The day before the storm, my husband and I were indecisive about evacuating.** Initially we planned to stay, but after watching our EOC Director in tears on the 10:00 news, we knew we needed to heed the evacuation order and leave. We loaded up both vehicles and left the house at 11:00 PM. I remember thinking as I locked the door, ‘what will we come home to?’ We drove to Mobile, Alabama and stopped at several hotels until we finally found a room.

The next morning, we woke up to a sunny day in Mobile. We started watching the weather and wondering how Bay County would fare. My husband and I received calls from friends and family that stayed behind, asking for updates once they lost power. I still remember the fear in their voices.

When the storm had passed, it took more than a day to learn how our home had fared and more than three days before we could see it with our own eyes. The drive back to our home is something I’ll never forget—emergency vehicles, with their sirens blaring,

moving in every direction and so much destruction that it felt like we were living through an apocalypse. Hurricane Michael made my family truly homeless for the first time in my life. I remember walking through what was left of our home for the first time and thinking how sunny it was without a roof. The parts of our roof that hadn’t completely blown away were now inside our home. All of our belongings were covered in debris and mold was already growing. We sorted through the mess and saved what we could, not knowing what our future would hold or what we would do.

I went back to work the following Monday. I knew there was nothing I could do about our home, so I welcomed the distraction and ability to help others. The months since the storm have been difficult. Most residents of Bay County can barely remember life before the storm. As we have moved further in recovery things have improved but as many have said, “this is our new norm.”

Since the storm, folks have struggled, particularly those who already dealt with substance abuse or other mental health problems. Many families remain in unsafe living conditions. These families are living in homes that have no electricity, mold, or have other hazardous conditions. Individuals that had minimal damage face survivors’ guilt. Others are still struggling with home repairs and the sense of frustration and stress continues. Stories are shared on a regular basis of children within the school and daycare settings visibly shaken after thunderstorms.

A private clinician has shared how her practice has seen an increase in children post-Hurricane Michael. Domestic violence is on the rise in areas affected by the storm.

Though it has been hard, the hurricane brought our community together. We are fortunate in Circuit 14 to have great collaboration among our providers. Several agencies’ buildings were destroyed and staff was displaced. I was able to coordinate with the Department of Health for our agencies in need to share their space until permanent arrangements could be made.

Big Bend CBC provided support not only to our agencies but directly to those in hurricane shelters. We provided crisis counseling and other mental health care where people were in order to best serve them. That experience allowed me to meet some amazing people and hear their stories of strength and survival. I am also proud that our community leaders trust and respect Big Bend CBC and have allowed us to be a part of the development of a recovery plan for Bay County.

Prior to the storm, I feared losing my belongings in a natural disaster like Michael. After losing nearly everything, I realize that it was all just stuff. There are times I still feel sadness about not having my high school memories or pictures of myself as a young child, but my children were safe and they did not experience the trauma of the storm itself. The storm helped me realize what is important in life and that stuff can be replaced, people can’t.



I also realized the importance of heeding evacuation warnings. We waited too long to evacuate. We were fortunate to find a hotel room to stay in to ride out the storm, but that may not always be the case.

I was more surprised about the way my children handled the situation than anything. When they both walked into the house for the first time you could see that it saddened them, but it did not devastate them. There were a few struggles along the way but not what I had expected.

As parents we want to protect our children and sometimes we think we are making the right choice but fail. The day we emptied our house, my first thought was that neither of our children should be there. My son asked to come along and, because he was older, I thought it would be okay. It was not until we were emptying out his room that I realized I had made a mistake. My son and I had just taken apart his bed and found his teddy bear from when he was a little boy. He loved that bear and took it everywhere. It was covered in mold and had to be discarded. He then announced that he was taking something to the garbage pile and did not come back for some time. I went outside to check on him and found him in the car upset. It is hard to see your life bagged up and thrown out to the curb like garbage.

***We are all survivors, and while the recovery from Hurricane Michael has been long and difficult, I truly believe we will become a better Bay.***

## BBCBC STAFF STORIES OF STRENGTH

**CARLA GAYLE WOFFORD**, *Dependency Case Management Social Worker*



“After the storm, my job and the families I serve are what kept me stable and motivated in the face of disaster. I needed them just as much as they needed me. As a case manager, I was able to experience a small part of what our kids go through in their lives. I have a better understanding of the disruption, uncertainty, loss of normalcy and of favorite possessions, and the feelings of security that we often take for granted.”

**ANGELA LEE**, *non-profit staff working with patients with Serious and Persistent Mental Illness*



“There are thousands of mental health workers who aide during times of crisis. These workers may be struggling to handle their personal emotions related to the devastation brought on by the storm. I know several staff who would smile and provide crisis counseling while struggling with their own anxiety and depression related to the impact that the hurricane had on their own families.”

**TARYN TASKER**, *Foster Family Liaison for Circuit 14 & foster parent*



“Being a foster parent myself and working with individuals in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael presents unique challenges. Trying to help an already traumatized child and their family through another trauma while you yourself are experiencing that same trauma is tough. The normal routines of life that help keep our kids grounded are suddenly gone. I have done my best to make my own temporary living situation positive and add as many fun things as I can to our life for the benefit of the child in our care and for others in foster care in our community.”



# HEART GALLERY





# SPOTLIGHT THE TRICE FAMILY



**Before Autumn and Byron met George and Jessie Trice, they had been in foster care for years and had lived in a group home for the last two years.** They had also been separated from their three other siblings for the years that they had been in care. Autumn and Byron came from an extremely traumatic past and desperately needed stability and love.

The Trice's have always wanted a family and decided to grow theirs through adoption. They looked at the Heart Gallery and were immediately drawn to Autumn and Byron. The Heart Gallery pictures had recently been updated to better showcase each child's unique personality.

When the four met for the first time, it was love at first sight for everyone. Byron absolutely bloomed during his visits with them, and Autumn enjoyed getting individual attention and being with a family, which is very different from the group home dynamic they had grown used to.

George and Jessie knew that Autumn and Byron completed their family and are helping keep them in touch with their other siblings. Autumn and Byron are thriving in a home where they receive attention, love, and guidance from loving, compassionate, and understanding parents that they look up to. They had become a true family well before their official adoption day.

*“When I looked at their new pictures in the Heart Gallery, I immediately knew that they were our babies.”*

*Jessie Trice*

*“When we first met Autumn and Byron, it was love at first sight. They were the missing piece of our family.”*

*George Trice*

# EXCEEDING ADOPTION GOALS ▶

Big Bend Community Based Care is proud to consistently exceed the goals set by the Department of Children and Families for adoptions in our region!

C2: **95**

C14: **112**

178  
GOAL ▲

207  
TOTAL ▲

## LAWLOR FAMILY

All of Darren's life, he has known Joe as "dad." Joe taught Darren everything thing he knows: how to fish, hunt, work on motors, cook, clean, and so on. Joe and Darren's mom had two more siblings and Joe treated Darren just like his biological children.

Unfortunately, the relationship between Joe and Darren's mother eventually ended. Darren and his siblings lived with their mother and saw their father on weekends. Eventually, Darren and his siblings went to live with dad. Darren was ecstatic.

Joe was eventually given the opportunity to adopt Darren and legally make him his son. Joe stated, "Darren has always parents that they look up to, this just makes it legal." After waiting anxiously, Darren was given the date for his adoption ceremony. On April 4, 2019, Darren was officially adopted by Joe and said, "This is the day I have been waiting for my whole life!"





# SPOTLIGHT ► ANNUAL CHRISTMAS ADOPTIONS

**BBCBC hosted Christmas adoption ceremonies in Tallahassee and Panama City in 2018.**

For the first time, an adoption ceremony was held on Christmas Eve in Panama City, in conjunction with Life Management Center. Judge Ana Maria Garcia, Circuit Judge in the Fourteenth Judicial Circuit, presided over the adoptions of two local children. Participating in the ceremony was Neveah, a 7-year-old who was adopted by her foster family, along with one other local child.

For the third year in a row in Tallahassee, Judge Sjostrom, Chief Judge of the Second Judicial Circuit, presided over the adoptions. This year, three young children were adopted in the Christmas Day ceremony. Two-year-old Shermiah and 11-month-old Amara were adopted by family members and 3-year-old Antonio was adopted by his foster family.

Adoption ceremonies are extremely special occasions no matter when they take place, but these Christmas adoptions were particularly special because a forever family is the best gift a child could receive.

***“Seeing a child go home with their forever family is easily the best part of what we do.” –Kathy Donofro, BBCBC Permanency Specialist***



# FIT SUCCESS STORY

## FOLLOW-UP ▼

Last year, we featured a FIT (Family Intensive Treatment) Program participant, Shannon. Shannon's life had taken a downward spiral and her children were removed from her care. She had no family support and suffered from addiction, so she entered Sisters in Sobriety's residential program. At the end of last year, she graduated from the substance abuse recovery program and regained custody of her youngest son.



Because of Shannon's past addiction, her son has a sensory processing disorder and some developmental challenges. She works diligently with his speech & occupational therapist. She also acknowledges that not only is it her responsibility as his mother, but that his challenges are the result of how her addiction during pregnancy impacted her son.

***"I have a chance to fix this. I'm lucky to have a second chance."***

Shannon is embracing her independence as she was recently gifted a car and no longer has to wait with her children for public transportation. She previously worked as a manager for a local café until her son's foster parent encouraged her to apply for an administrative assistant position at Big Bend Community Based Care.

***"I figured there was no way they would hire me because of my past and history with this building. I have a past but fortunately no criminal history. If I got this job, I would have to work in the office with the people that removed my children."***

Shannon got the job!

In addition to being an active member of the parent board at her son's daycare, Shannon is currently enrolled in college and working towards a Bachelor's degree in Social Work, where she plans to specialize in addiction recovery. She is also working with her former case manager to form a support group for birth parents struggling with adoption and foster care issues.

Shannon is often asked to speak to students at Florida State University and at Sisters in Sobriety.

***"I am an example to them. I told myself, 'I can't fail at this.' I am proof to other parents that it can be done."***

Shannon continues to use the tools that she has learned and the supports that she has built to successfully parent her children.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ▼

**This year, our community engagement activities were centered around the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act and Hurricane Michael, and using these opportunities to promote positive relationships within our communities.**

After the 2018 Legislature enacted the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act, Governor Rick Scott's Executive Order on the subject, and Governor and First Lady DeSantis' emphasis on mental health, BBCBC continued our efforts and focus on school safety initiatives with Sheriffs, School Superintendents, network providers, legislators, and other community stakeholders. Specifically, we met and contracted with Sheriffs in rural counties to be first-on-the-scene when there is a call to Mobile Response Team (MRT) when a child or young person is in crisis. In addition, we participated Circuit Collaboration Meetings—led by Department of Children and Families and their staff, BBCBC staff, and Baker Act Central Receiving Facilities around the region—within the Northwest Region. These meetings covered discussions

of Community Action Teams, MRTs, and county adolescent Baker Act admissions.

Due to Hurricane Michael's direct hit in Circuit 14 and impact to Circuit 2 on October 10, 2018, many of our community engagement activities were devoted to operational recovery efforts for our clients, providers, and staff. We focused on securing permanent housing and workspace for our clients, providers, and staff and on supporting those we serve any way possible.

Finally, we continued to communicate our mission, vision, and purpose to our community stakeholders to promote positive relationships within the community, including with the clients we serve, our provider network, community partners, and staff, to ensure child welfare and behavioral health needs were being met in our 18-county coverage area.



*“Volunteers like Rachel Goodson are a vital part of what we do at BBCBC and give us the opportunity to work directly with the people we serve.”*

*Mike Watkins, CEO*

# MOBILE RESPONSE TEAMS ▼

As part of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act and Governor Scott's Executive Order on school safety, the Florida Legislature allocated funds to initiate Mobile Response Teams to cover every county in Florida. The teams provide 24/7 on-demand crisis intervention services in any setting in which a behavioral health crisis is occurring, including homes, schools, shelters, and emergency rooms.

Services include immediate evaluations and assessments, development of safety or crisis plans, stabilization services, supportive crisis counseling, education, and development of coping skills for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. The

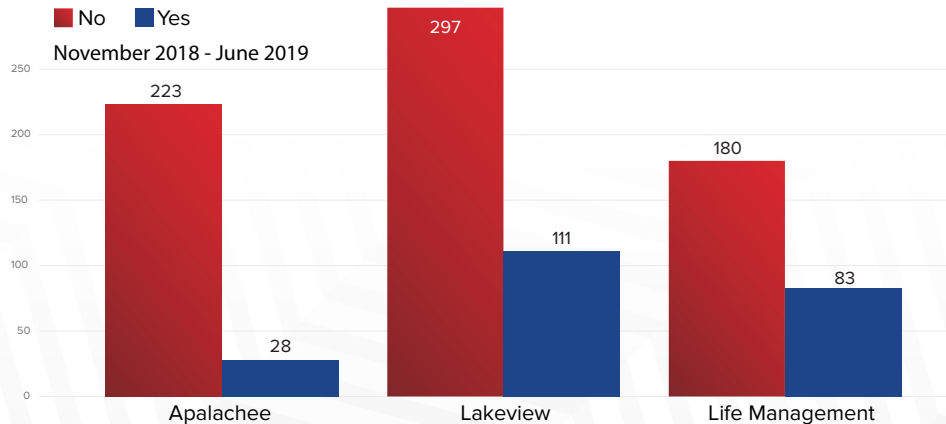
teams also link individuals to appropriate resources and are available 24/7 to anyone, regardless of ability to pay for medical services. When a team is dispatched to the location of a crisis, the target response time is less than 60 minutes.

BBCBC contracted with Apalachee Center to cover the greater Tallahassee area; Life Management Center to cover the greater Panama City area; and Lakeview Center to cover the four counties of Circuit 1. Additionally, rural county sheriff's offices were invited to participate as part of the immediate response teams via tele-health connection, particularly for night and weekend responses.

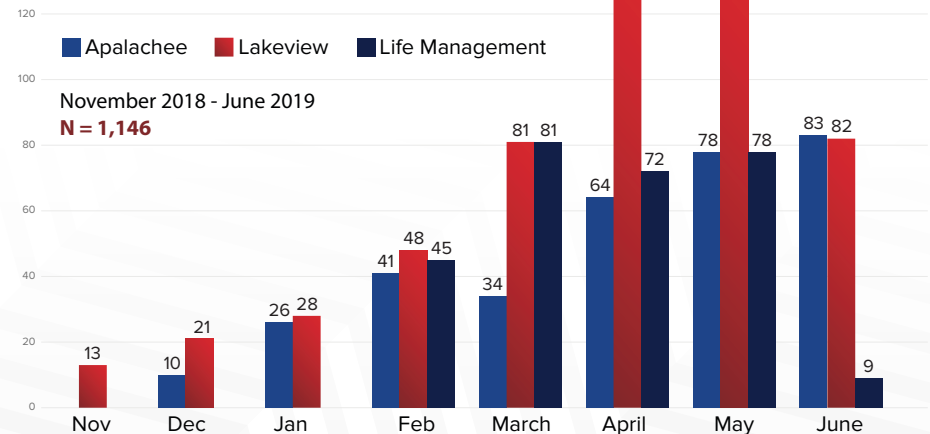
The rollout of the response teams was hindered by Hurricane Michael, but all teams were fully operational by the spring of 2019. As of June 2019, over 1,146 calls had been received across the three teams. Many of the calls are handled via phone or telehealth device.

When the Mobile Response Teams are dispatched, the average response time is 26.5 minutes. Of all calls received, 76% do not result in a Baker Act of the client. By intervening early, MRTs can help prevent costly and unnecessary stays in community hospitals and jails for those suffering from mental illness.

## DID INCIDENT RESULT IN INVOLUNTARY ADMISSION (BAKER ACT)?



## MRT CLIENTS SERVED





# CAT TEAMS ▼

**Community Action Treatment (CAT)** teams provide community-based services to children ages 11 to 21 with a mental health or co-occurring substance abuse diagnosis with any accompanying characteristics such as being at-risk for out-of-home placement; having two or more hospitalizations; involvement with the Department of Juvenile Justice or multiple episodes involving law enforcement; or poor academic performance or suspensions. Children younger than 11 may be candidates if they display two or more of the aforementioned characteristics.

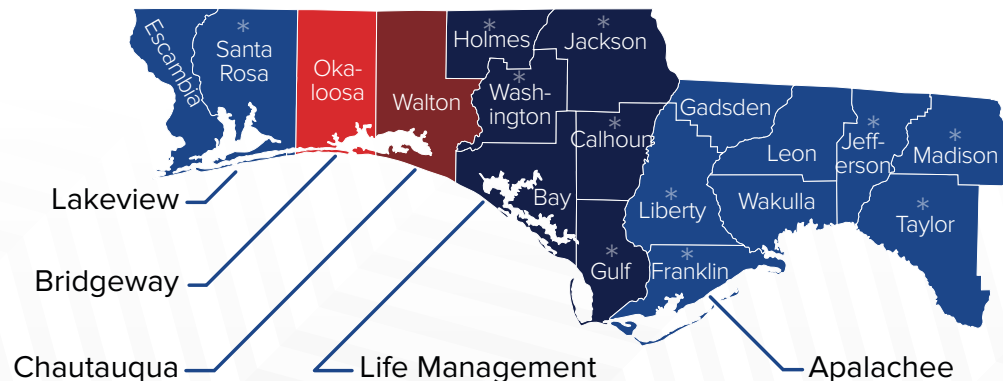
During FY 17-18, five CAT contracts were transferred from the Department of Children and Families to BBCBC. During FY 18-19, an additional 5 teams were established for a total of \$7.5 million in

funding and giving CAT coverage to every county in the Florida panhandle. Each team maintains a census of 35+ children and is comprised of a team leader, mental health clinician, part-time nurse, part-time psychiatrist, case manager, and therapeutic mentor. CAT team members work collaboratively to deliver the majority of behavioral health services for the patient, coordinate with other service providers when necessary, and assist the family in developing or strengthening their natural support system.

CAT is intended to be a safe and effective alternative to out-of-home placement for children with serious behavioral health conditions. Upon successful completion, the family should have the skills and natural support system needed to maintain improvements made during services.

## The goals of the CAT program are to:

1. Strengthen the family support systems for youth and young adults;
2. Improve school-related outcomes such as attendance, grades, and graduation rates;
3. Decrease out-of-home placements;
4. Improve family and youth functioning;
5. Decrease substance abuse;
6. Decrease psychiatric hospitalizations;
7. Transition into age appropriate services; and
8. Increase health and wellness.



**During FY 18-19, an additional 5 teams were established for a total of \$7.5 million in funding and giving CAT coverage to every county in the Florida panhandle.**

New teams marked with a \*

# LOOKING TOWARDS 2019-2020 ▼

## TELEHEALTH

Following Hurricane Michael, the need for mental health services increased dramatically in the affected areas while the availability of mental health professionals decreased. To alleviate some of that, BBCBC began working on telehealth solutions to the limited access to mental health care that many face.

BBCBC partnered with our local providers and private businesses to create a solution that meets the needs of those we serve, with funding from the state legislature and a USDA Rural Utilities Telemedicine grant. BBCBC plans to provide telehealth kiosks to schools and jails in the panhandle in areas where people do not have access to mental health professionals in their communities.

In rural jails, inmates will be given a behavioral health screening upon being admitted and then can receive treatment from mental health professionals, both while in jail and then once released, without having to physically travel to that provider's office. This program will allow for residents to better transition back into their lives when released from jail and reduce the risk of relapse and recidivism.

In schools, BBCBC is in the early stages of providing telehealth kiosks so that students will have access to mental health professionals without having to leave their school, and without that professional having to physically travel to them.

These programs will be fully rolled out during the 2019-2020 fiscal year and we look forward to reporting on them in our next Annual Report!

## GAP PROGRAM



Beginning in May of 2019, BBCBC began implementing the Guardian Assistance Program (GAP). GAP will allow BBCBC to better serve those who want to foster relatives or close family friends. This program will help with licensing and supporting new foster families as they embark on this journey. BBCBC is currently supporting 20 families through GAP and will continue to enroll new families that volunteer to foster relatives.



# COMMUNITY PARTNERS ▼

2-1-1 Big Bend

Ability 1st

AMI Kids

Anchorage Children's Home

Apalachee Center

Bay District Schools

Boys Town

Bridgewater Center, Inc

Camelot Community Care

Capital City Youth Services, Inc

Chautauqua Healthcare Services

Chemical Addictions Recovery (CARE)

Children's Home Society

Children's Medical Services Network

Community Drug & Alcohol Council (CDAC)

DISC Village, Inc

Emergency Care Help Organization (ECHO)

Escambia County

FivePoints

Florida Alcohol and Drug Abuse Association (FADAA)

Florida Association of Managing Entities (FAME)

Florida Baptist Children's Homes

Florida Coalition for Children (FCC)

Florida Department of Children and Families

Florida Department of Health

Florida State Foster/Adoptive Parent Association (FSFAPA)

Florida State University

Fort Walton Beach Medical Center

Guardian ad Litem

Gulf Coast Children's Advocacy Center

Habilitative Services of North Florida, Inc

Healthy Families Florida

Lakeview Center, Baptist Health Care

Leon County

Life Management Center of Northwest Florida, Inc

Mental Health Association of Okaloosa & Walton Counties

Neighborhood Medical Center

Okaloosa County

Pancare Foundation

Panhandle Behavioral Services

Parents, Providers & Community Advocating for Children Together (PACT)

Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI)

Tallahassee Community College

Turn About

VOICES for Florida



# COMMUNITY DONORS ▼

Amanda Birch	Matt & Dostie Dragon	Nichole Mills	The Grand Pier Park	Parker Elementary	Becky Sauers	Glenna and David
FSU Fashion Club	Emily Faulkner	Leslie Mollet	One Heart Yoga	School	Pat Tuthill	Schluck
Kenisha Thomas	Jane Fleming	Kenny & Laura Murrell	Fun 4 Emerald Coast	Fire Dept. HWY-22	Robin Wilson	Gwynn Virostek
Sprouting Kids	Florida FAPA	Tammy Newton	Kids	Forest Park United	Betty Cureton	HCA Healthcare, Inc
Academy	Amanda & Will Foster	Kim Nolen	Patches	Methodist	Debbie Moerlins	Home Depot
“My Favorite Books”	John & Lisa Franklin	Sharon Odom	Panhandle Helicopter	Winn-Dixie	Janet Kahn	It’s a 10 Hair Care
Sweet Cases	Bobbie Gaddis	Jennifer Owen	Beaus	Ladies Learning to	Marci & Glen Beck	Kidz Pointe
Faith DeKanter	Mary Catherine Garrett	Trudy Petkovich	Sweet frogs	Lead	HCA North Florida	Consignment Shop
Sorenson & VanLeuvan	Chelsea Gay	Sandy Sallinger	Walmart	Dress for Success	Division	Lisa Peerson
Law Firm	Wanda Gay	Gil & Ruthy Sanchez	Plum Delightful	Cori McGooden	Save the Children	Northwoods Baptist
Jamille Peterson	Stacey Gay	Desiree Schroeder	Kartona Indoor Motor	David Daniels	Comfort Cases	Church
“Remember Me	Tiffany Griffin	Andrew & Tasha	Speedway	Janice Thomas	Florida Coalition for	Payless Shoes
Project”	Richard & Sharon Griffin	Shelley	Emerald Coast Olive Oil	Rachel Hines	Children	Scholastic Books
Lisa Maxwell	Michele Grignot	Randy & Sheila Shores	Mr. Surfs Stand Up	Marcia Mathis	Mike Bryant	SunshineTallahassee
John & Loretta	Steve & Nicole	Tiffany Small	Paddle Board	Roderick Harris	Lane Reeder	Alumnae Chapter of
Galeener	Gurganus	Don Sublett	Ripley’s Believe it or	Pam East	Thomas Fuller, MD	Delta Sigma Theta
Growing Room	Cindy Hamre	Tabetha Taylor	Not	Jeremy Smith	Ace Hardware	Sorority, Inc
Hasbro/Good360	Amy Hancock	Debbie Taylor	Pirate Island	Rae Kerr	Anchor School	Wakulla United
Anessa & Scott Dungey	Connie Harris	Tina Turner	Captain Anderson’s	Margaret Petronio	Camelot Prep School	Methodist Church
Sherry Anderson	Taylor Hill	Leah Voorhies	Starbucks	Chris & Rian Meadows	Camelot Community	Thom & Tammy
Katie Anderson	Book That Condo	Lauren Wagner-Ortiz	Florida Linen	Felicia Wilhelmy	Care Foster Parents	Backender
Jamie Averett	Adrienne & Nathan	Bobby & Chrissy Ward	Coconut Creek	Mike Watkins	Carita Sims	Will & Amanda Foster
Thom & Tammy	Jenkins	Jessica Ward	Mimi Graham	Quantara Smith	Downtown Community	Taylor Hill
Bachelor	Ashlyn Jernigan	Kristy & Steve Webb	Lucilla’s	Tara Taylor	Church	Nathan & Adrienne
Catherine Bidy	Patricia Johnson	Kristin White	Jeff Sharkey	Kristin & Tony White	Elder Care Services	Jenkins
Bruce & Janet Brogdon	Martha Johnson	Amy Worley	Grub Burger	Diego’s Mexican	Families First of Florida	Leslie Mollett
Danner Brooks	Selena Justice	JoAnne Wright	High Praise	Restaurant	Florida Alcohol	Kenny & Laura Murrell
Cynthia Brubaker	Kay Kelly	Dave and Busters	St. Dominic’s	Misti Gibbens	and Drug Abuse	Steve & Kristy Webb
Wendy Carlson	Sarah Kennedy	Zaxby’s	Callaway First Baptist	Foster Family Support	Association	
Shelby Cayce	Keith & Jackie Kirkland	Park Memorial United	Springfield Baptist	Services	Florida Coalition for	
Terry Cowan	April Klein	Methodist Church	Trinity Lutheran Church	Cindy’s Consignment	Children	
Marissa DeHaven	Earl & Sara LaBonte	The Deloney Family	Woodlawn United	Steve Butts	Florida State Foster	
Carolyn DeShields	Kelly Lee	PCB Aquatic Center	Methodist	Kim Gonzales	& Adoptive Parent	
Margarite Dispato	Betty Masters	Yoga Elements	St. Andrews Baptist	Lady Links	Association	
					Foster Florida	
					Tallahassee	



# SERVICE CENTERS ▼

## **Big Bend Community Based Care**

Administrative Office  
525 N. Martin Luther King Blvd., Tallahassee, FL 32306  
850.410.1020

## **Bay County Service Center**

910 Harrison Avenue, Panama City, FL 32401  
850.747.5755

## **Gulf County Service Center**

407 Reid Avenue, Suite C, Port St. Joe, FL 32456  
850.229.6854

## **Jackson County Service Center**

4120 Jireh Court, Marianna 32448  
850.482.9568

## **Holmes/Washington County Service Center**

1352 South Blvd., Chipley, FL 32428  
850.415.5146

## **Leon County Service Center**

1000 West Tharpe Street, Tallahassee, FL 32301  
850.488.0506

## **Gadsden/Liberty County Service Center**

305 West Crawford Street, Quincy, FL 32351  
850.627.7009

## **Wakulla County Service Center**

69 High Road, Crawfordville, FL 32327  
850.926.0024





### Big Bend Community Based Care

525 N. Martin Luther King Blvd., Tallahassee, FL 32306

850.410.1020

[BigBendCBC.org](http://BigBendCBC.org)

