Dear Friends,

The Greek philosopher and scientist, Aristotle said, “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” At Applewood Centers we agree, whether we are thinking about the clients and families we serve, our community, or the overall agency. We understand that our strength is in coming together, in overcoming obstacles, and in striving to ensure that the needs of our community and its youth are served in the best way possible. In 2014, not only did Applewood Centers excel in achieving our mission of serving youth and families but we did so by providing sound therapeutic services with excellent outcomes. And, importantly, we concluded the year with a strong, financial outlook ensuring a bright future for both the agency and our community. Great parts, indeed, but all told so much more.

While our overall success in 2014 is notable, it is important to consider the individual factors that contributed to the positive results that were realized. Over the last few years, we chose to align our services to ensure the greatest accessibility for those most in need of our expertise. In this year’s annual report we highlight two of those efforts that have enabled us to serve more and more clients across the community. Several years ago we transitioned from a traditional outpatient model, where clients come to our office for service, to one that is school-based. This model enables us to serve more children and remove many of the barriers to accessibility that existed in the past, such as scheduling, transportation, and other challenges many of our families face daily. In 2014, our counselors and social workers were in over 68 schools in 12 school districts across northeastern Ohio.

Another program featured in this annual report is our After School Group Counseling Program. This program, a natural outgrowth of the School-based Program, gives students who need more intensive clinical services a program they can attend after their school day ends. In this program they practice social skills and self-control while having fun in a structured, therapeutic atmosphere. The program has grown exponentially over the last year and has increased our ability to impact young lives across the area.

On the whole, Applewood Centers served nearly 6,000 youth and families in 2014 and reached deeply into our community. I am proud of our ability to adapt to the changing needs of the community and of the work accomplished in both the School-based and After School programs; but these are just the parts. On behalf of our Board of Directors and staff, I thank you for your ongoing interest and support of our work.

A Message...

Thomas Bechtel  
Chair, Board of Directors

Melanie K. Falls,  
Executive Director
### Mission
Applewood Centers fosters solutions for children, youth, and families.

### Vision
Applewood Centers is a leader in improving the lives of children in Ohio by providing high-quality behavioral healthcare and out-of-home services for children and families.

### Commitment
- Embrace our Core Values in all we do
- Deliver high quality, results-focused programs and services
- Ensure the agency’s long-term economic viability
- Develop a diverse team of skilled professionals
- Build on over 175 years of excellence in service
- Serve a diverse population reflective of our community
- Monitor and ensure desired outcomes for children
- Employ training and technology to best support excellent service

### Affiliations & Accreditations
Applewood Centers is licensed and certified by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS), and licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Ohio Department of Education. We are accredited by The Joint Commission and American Psychological Association. Funding is provided in part by the Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services Board of Cuyahoga County and the Lorain County Board of Mental Health.

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For over 30 years, Applewood Centers has been providing on-site counseling in the schools. We have over 28 licensed therapists and counselors who are resident in schools throughout Lorain and Cuyahoga counties including Cleveland Metropolitan School District schools, charter schools, and the Maple Heights, Warrensville Heights, and Richmond Heights school districts. Students can participate in one or a combination of programs to meet specific needs.

- **Individual Counseling** in the school, at home, and during school breaks addresses specific behavioral and emotional issues.
- **Group Counseling** sessions are aimed at skill building and focus on specific topics. This format encourages cooperation and sharing among peers in a structured setting.
- **Prevention Groups** help students make better choices. Topics include anger management, violence prevention, social skills, and gender-specific issues.
- **Classroom Presentations** are offered on topics such as building self-esteem, conflict resolution, leadership skills, grief, and bereavement.

The family is involved throughout treatment. Parent advisory sessions are geared to assist with the development of parenting strategies and linkage to other community resources. Family intervention sessions include the student and family. Families can also receive services in the home.

Our school-based team is also an important part of the administrative team. During a crisis, tragedy or natural disaster, we collaborate with school personnel in providing group interventions and support in areas including grief, bereavement and emotional trauma.

Additionally, our therapists and counselors support faculty with a variety of interventions through team meetings, and teacher consultation and training.
Right before she entered first grade, shy, petite Maria may not have been able to spell the word chaos, but she certainly knew what it felt like.

That summer Maria’s parents went through a difficult divorce and Maria and her mom moved into her maternal grandparents small, three bedroom apartment on Cleveland’s west side. They shared that space with cousins.

Although Maria related well to her grandparents, her cousins took a perverse pleasure in teasing the sensitive little girl. Her mother tried to intervene, but this behavior continued.

Maria’s troubled home life played havoc with her self-esteem. Sensing her weakness, her classmates began to bully her. Soon, Maria found reasons not to go to school. When she was in class she showed signs of depression and her grades were poor.

Her teachers’ concern prompted them to contact Jason, the Applewood school-based counselor in the school. “When I met Maria she was having difficulty coping during the day, was dealing with anxiety, and did not have friends,” said Jason.

Jason met with Maria’s mother that week and determined that Maria would initially benefit from individual counseling during the school day as well as in-home counseling. During the individual sessions, Jason helped Maria build her self-esteem and learn coping strategies for when she felt teased or bullied.
Maria’s Story cont’d

After several home-based visits, Jason and Maria’s mom agreed that the multi-family living conditions were not in the best interest for Maria. Jason also suggested that Maria engaged in social activities with kids her own age. A few weeks later, mother and daughter moved into a sunny, second floor duplex and started going to a neighborhood church where Maria became involved in the congregation’s youth group and Bible study class.

Because Maria struggled with math, her mom made a commitment to making sure that math worksheets were completed every evening. With Jason’s guidance, she also made a large chart with gold stars marking Maria’s progress.

Maria continued meeting with Jason weekly in school for counseling and role-playing sessions where Maria practiced social skills and how to stand up for herself. By winter, she started participating in Applewood’s therapeutic After School Group Counseling program. Jason also made frequent home visits where Maria’s mother warmly welcomed him.

By March, Maria’s academic progress was below grade level and it was suggested she not be promoted to second grade. Trusting her daughter’s ability to succeed, Maria’s mom asked the school to continue to let her work with her daughter during the summer on her math and reading skills.

Throughout the summer, Maria participated in Applewood’s summer counseling group program. Jason saw Maria blossom socially and academically. “Maria spoke about riding her bike to the neighborhood pool with friends, reading books with her mom at the library, and going to the roller skating rink,” said Jason. “She also showed me the gold stars she earned from mastering her math and reading worksheets.”

When Maria entered second grade she fit right in and performed at grade level. She amazed her teachers by doing the simple multiplication her mom had taught her.

Much to everyone’s delight, Maria’s first report card contained four A’s and a few B’s.

“My goal was to empower Maria and her mom to make changes in their lives,” said Jason. “And from the smiles on their faces when Maria brought home her report card, our combined efforts worked beautifully.”
Through our After School Group Counseling Program, children ages six to 13 receive intensive group counseling. This program has proven to be an effective way of treating children with severe emotional and behavioral difficulties such as relationship difficulties with peers and adults, extreme fears, anger, mood disturbance, depression, and impulsive or aggressive behaviors.

During the school year, groups are held every weekday and children receive assistance with homework and are provided a meal prior to group counseling. In the summer, the program converts to a full day program that includes breakfast and lunch along with two intensive therapeutic group sessions.

All session are held at Applewood and children may attend daily or on any combination of days based on needs identified on an individualized service plan. Each day consists of a variety of activities and challenges centered around a therapeutic theme. Led by therapists and counselors, the group process provides children with opportunities to share their thoughts and feelings, and to learn skills that will enable them to be more successful.
When Tamika came to school last year, the third grader’s matching sweater and skirt sets, brightly colored nail polish, and snappy barrettes gave her a dressed-for-success look. But looks can be deceiving.

Tamika faced so many behavioral and social problems in school that the eight year old was losing ground fast. Her attendance rate was abysmal, and despite receiving special math and reading assistance from intervention specialists, her grades were falling. To make matters worse, she suffered from high anxiety levels, and often exhibited argumentative and defiant behavior when relating to her peers and adults.

Within weeks, school administrators sought the services of Linda, the Applewood Centers school-based counselor.

Since the School-based Counseling Program focuses on building bridges between home and school, Linda immediately contacted Tamika’s mother. She was told that Tamika’s poor attendance was due to her mother’s casual, indifferent attitude about getting her daughter to school on time — an issue that Linda wanted to address immediately.

The counselor also learned that Tamika, whose father was in jail, was often left alone at home with a 19 year old sister. Tamika resented her sister’s supervision, often unleashing her anger on her younger sister. Tamika’s hostile relationships at home made life miserable for those around her, including fellow students in the classroom.
Although Tamika’s mother was initially very difficult to engage, she finally became convinced that Tamika needed to see a psychiatrist before things got even worse.

After an extensive assessment and evaluation, Tamika was diagnosed with ADHD and was prescribed a medication to lower her anxiety levels and help her concentrate in school. Within weeks Tamika’s teachers began to see a change in her attention level.

To address Tamika’s other emotional issues, Linda recommended Applewood’s partial hospitalization after-school program two days a week. This program offers intensive psychiatric services to children through an outpatient setting. Tamika participated in various structured, therapeutic and psycho-educational groups that focused on behavioral health topics including developing interpersonal skills; how to enhance relationships with adults, peers, and her family members; building problem-solving and conflict resolutions skills; and learning positive coping mechanisms.

This combination of school-based counseling and after school intensive therapy was instrumental in helping Tamika learn to develop healthy coping skills, manage her anger, and stabilize her mental state.

“Tamika enjoyed attending these therapeutic sessions very much, plus transportation was provided for her,” said Linda.

Within months, Tamika’s progress was evident to all. The combination of ADHD medication, daily math and reading intervention, therapy sessions with Applewood’s school-based counselor, and the partial hospitalization program all worked to Tamika’s benefit.

Due to Linda’s constant communication with Tamika’s mom, and the positive changes she began to see in her daughter, Tamika’s mother began to become a more active participant in Tamika’s life. She worked hard to get her to school every day, spent more time with her at home, and even helped her with her homework.

By March of that school year Tamika took a fourth grade proficiency test and passed it with flying colors. That success was a big boost for Tamika’s morale and self-esteem. She even gave Linda a big hug when she got the news.

Right before spring break, Tamika presented Linda with a large drawing of the two of them smiling and holding hands.

“Tamika and I had a very special relationship,” said Linda. “I am so grateful that our team approach worked so well for this little girl. I look forward to following her progress.”
Programs & Services

Mental Health Outpatient & Community Services
- Outpatient Counseling
- School-Based Services
- After School and Summer Group Counseling
- Psychiatry Services
- Intensive Home-based Treatment
- Community Psychiatric Supportive Treatment
- Multisystemic Therapy
- Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Parent Management Training
- Early Childhood Mental Health
- Special Needs Child Care Consultation

Residential Treatment
- Mental Health Treatment and Intervention
- Co-occurring Alcohol and Drug Treatment
- Partial Hospitalization

Foster Care and Adoption

Spanish Speaking Bilingual Services

The Gerson School
Co-educational alternative day school for students in grades 6 through 12 who benefit from a personal and therapeutic environment. Approved by the Ohio Department of Education, the school serves a variety of students including those with emotional or behavioral difficulties.
The Junior Advisory Board (JAB) was created in the spring of 2012 in response to the Board of Director’s goal to cultivate future directors and increase outreach in the community. This active group of young professionals has been planning events focused on client support, community awareness, and fundraising for agency programming.

In the short time that JAB has been functioning, thousands of dollars have been raised as a result of their efforts through individual and corporate donations, which have been reinvested in agency programming and client events.

Some of the successful programs planned by members of the Junior Advisory Board include *An Afternoon at the Movies* red carpet event for the agency’s Foster Care youth, a spring prom for students at The Gerson School, and a Trivia Night fund-raiser and networking event for area young professionals.

JAB is always looking for young professionals with leadership skills, energy, and the desire to make an impact on at-risk youth. Interested individuals should contact Applewood’s JAB liaison at (216) 320-6827.
Expenses

EXPENSES BY PROGRAM

- General/Administrative: 42%
- Education/Prevention: 27%
- Foster Care/Adoption: 14%
- Community Services: 9%
- Residential/Group Services: 8%

EXPENSES BY TYPE

- Depreciation/Equipment: 58%
- Development: 12%
- Occupancy: 24%
- Professional Fees: 5%
- Salary/Benefits: 1%
Community Impact

Counseling & Outpatient Services

- 28 Applewood therapists have been trained in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT).

- Two Psychology APA interns joined the Outpatient Counseling program. Over 200 children received psychological testing with our new capacity.

- The Lorain County Board of Mental Health allocated support money to support Applewood’s Intensive Home Based Treatment in response to the high demand for this counseling service.

- Over 120 children were served by the Early Childhood team who has specialized training in Early Childhood Mental Health treatment for children up to age 6.

  Applewood’s home therapists implemented a trauma-informed approach with clients to identify how trauma impacts the youth we serve, and provide evidenced based treatment practices to help effect positive change.
Psychiatry Services
• The Psychiatry program supported more than 1,400 clients.

School-Based Counseling
• Applewood counselors and social workers in over 68 schools in 12 school districts provide individual and group counseling, assessments, and behavioral intervention to students referred by teachers and administrators due to behavior problems or mental/behavioral health issues.
• Over 200 youth participated in After School Group Counseling

Residential Treatment Services
• Applewood partnered with Ohio Department of Youth Services to provide residential programming for incarcerated, female youth with significant mental health and trauma histories through our Apple Blossom for Girls residential programs. The program, which gained positive attention at the State level for innovative and creative approaches, provides intensive, trauma-informed programming that uses empirically based interventions, such as Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, to help youth regain control of their emotions, manage their behaviors, and understand their feelings.
Foster Care & Adoption

• Two young men in our foster care program graduated from high school and started college at Bowling Green State University.

• A former Applewood Centers foster youth was the keynote speaker at a graduation program for prospective foster parents. Now a filmmaker, she shared her life experiences prior to becoming a foster youth and how her foster mother made a positive difference in her life.

• The agency maintained a high rate of permanency for youth in foster homes.

• Under our contract with Cuyahoga County’s Tapestry System of Care program, we created a Lead Care Coordinator position that led to marked improvement in the Continuous Quality Improvement requirements, and has resulted in a more streamlined intake and mental health assessment process.
Gerson School

• Gerson was the first school to work with Dr. Ben-Porath, Ph.D., of John Carroll University’s Department of Psychological Science, to incorporate Dialectical Behavior Therapy concepts and interventions into an educational setting. Gerson hosted training on the topic to educators from the greater Cleveland area.

• The school joined The Ohio Department of Education in adopting the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model, which uses positive reinforcement and recognizes each student’s positive attributes as a foundation. School Wide Information System was implemented to document behavior in order to make adjustments or to reinforce the behavior programming used at the school.

By the Numbers

• 1,500 students received services from school-based counselors

• 1,600 clients were served in a variety of outpatient services including psychological testing

• 860 clients received services from In-home programs
Donors

The following individuals, corporations, and foundations contributed to Applewood Centers between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014. Thank you for your support and trust as we help children, youth and families manage life’s challenges. We make every effort to ensure our donors’ names and contributions are reported accurately. If you believe we have made an error, please accept our apology and call the Development Office at (216) 320-6827, and we will be happy to make a correction in our records.

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We would also like to gratefully thank the numerous businesses and individuals who donated goods and services and many volunteer hours on behalf of the agency. In particular, the Holiday Lights donors who provided hundreds of gifts for our clients making a wonderful holiday possible.

Thank You!