

# 175th Anniversary

On Thanksgiving Day 2010, Family Service will celebrate the 175th anniversary of our founding as The Indianapolis Benevolent Society in 1835. Our fascinating history, achievements, and stories of success will be featured in events throughout the year commemorating this remarkable milestone. The high point of the celebration will be signature events in April and November. Quick Links 175th Anniversary video

175 year timeline

Stand Up for Families - November 13, 2010 Encouraging Words Campaign

## Keeping Families Together Since 1835

In 1835, on Thanksgiving Day, our organization began as The Indianapolis Benevolent Society. We were families helping families, an all-volunteer organization dedicated to providing food, shelter and clothing to families in need.

As we evolved, we became Family Service of Central Indiana. We continued to add social workers, case workers and psychologists. The issues families face today are not unlike the issues 175 years ago. Depression. Addiction. Domestic Violence. Financial hardships. Disabilities. Child abuse. The Challenges of Aging.

To date, we have helped more than 1,400,000 individuals right here in central Indiana. But we will not stop until every family in our community knows that we are here for them in their hour of need.

We're proud to celebrate 175 years of keeping families together. It's a time of Thanks and Giving but we continue to need your help. We need more social workers, trainers, and mentors. We need more volunteers and advocates. We need you to donate but most of all, we need you to share our story. To spread our message of hope.

We say thanks to so many of you who continue to give. With your support, we will not stop strengthening our community and assisting families in need. Please let us know how you will help, send us an email at [info@family-service-inc.org](mailto:info@family-service-inc.org) or give us a call at 317-634-6341

## Historical Facts about Family Service

- For the first 40 years, the organization was completely run by volunteers with all services provided by unpaid staff.

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Researched and cited nationally as a pioneer of the early 1800s philanthropic movement in the United States, and Family Service exists as the oldest not-for-profit social service agency in Indianapolis.

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Believed to be the first organization in the country founded to provide assistance on a community-wide basis regardless of race or creed.

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Recognized for a series of lectures given in 1890 which represented one of the first examples of formal education for social workers in the United States.

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And many of today's local charitable organizations, including Flanner House, the Children's Bureau, and Legal Aid Society can trace their lineage back to members and programs of the Indianapolis Benevolent Society.

## Changing to Meet the Needs of the Community

Since its beginning Family Service has been committed to strengthening family life for the whole community. Throughout the last 175 years Family Service has adapted and changed with the community to meet the needs of families. For example...

- In the 1840's Family Service added to its mission to help people find employment and established the Widows and Orphans Friends Society to help the town's poorer women and to provide care for children.

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During the Civil War, Family Service devoted itself to the women and children of soldiers who were left behind and provided assistance and care for families of soldiers that did not return from battle.

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In the late 1870s and early 1880s Family Service established The Charity Organization Society as a way to unite charitable organizations and businesses around efforts to help those in need. During this time, the agency also reached out to the area's transients by providing food and lodging in exchange for work through The Friendly Inn and Woodyard.

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In the 1930s and 40s, Family Service began homemaker services to provide in-home care for children when a mother was ill, help with child development and parenting, preparing a family budget, and helping elderly persons to maintain their independence.

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In the 1960s, Family Service began providing financial education classes helping families save money and improve credit.

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And, in the 1980s, Family Service continued its commitment to families by expanding services into Central Indiana and devoted itself to serving the area's most vulnerable citizens, helping those with a history of severe problems such as violence and abuse of children.