

# Our Agency's History

Founded in 1965 as a rural day camp for youth, TFI Family Services, Inc. has grown to become a state-wide child welfare and behavioral health organization providing a broad array of services for children and families.

## 1960's

The Farm, Inc. began in 1965 as a summer camp ran by Maxine Johnson and her family on a farm near Admire, Kansas. After several years of successfully running the summer camp, the Lyon County juvenile judge and county welfare director approached the Johnsons, asking if they would consider taking children all year long. Our story was only just beginning.

## 1960 through 1970's

During our first years, The Farm specialized in long term residential care with the capacity to care for 24 children at a time and often keeping brothers and sisters together. The girls lived in a big re-modeled farm house and the boys in a ranch style lodge. The children learned to fish, swim, camp and to appreciate all the aspects of living on a farm while attending public school and a local church. The Johnsons encouraged the children to be active in their school and community. In school, they participated in sports, cheerleading, plays, band, and as class leaders. They were also involved in 4-H and state fairs. As a family, they took canoe trips, vacations and celebrated graduations. Support for The Farm came from the local Jaycee and Elks' organizations.

## 1980's

This was the decade of change for The Farm. Child Welfare began moving more toward permanency for children in smaller, family like settings and adoption was being explored as a case plan goal for children. Residential stays were seen only as a short term alternative care. In 1985, the founding mother of The Farm, Maxine Johnson, passed away. After 20 years of caring for the children, Maxine's husband and sister retired and Peggy S. Martin became the second Executive Director in The Farm, Inc.'s history. In the late 1980's, the agency moved from its rural location to a facility called J- Max in Emporia, Kansas, which had formerly been a group home for United Methodist Youthville. The Farm used the Boy's Town Achievement place program model. A year later, The Farm opened an emergency shelter in Emporia for boys and girls called the Oakes House.

## 1990's

Another decade of significant change. The Farm saw children completing their program model at J-Max with no where to go and children having long stays in their emergency shelter. SRS was now allowing child welfare agencies the ability to sponsor foster families. In response, The Farm started up their own family foster care program. And in doing so, developed a model that broke all the old rules. They assigned a social worker 24/7 to the foster family. There were foster care training retreats, monthly support meetings and monthly newsletters. With the popularity of this model, The Farm's sponsorships exploded throughout Kansas, fostering office expansions in southeast, south central, northeast and southwest Kansas. In 1996, Kansas became the first State in the Union to privatize its foster care/reintegration, adoption and family preservation services. The Farm became one of the largest state wide subcontractors for a variety of family foster care homes and adoption services. It was also at this time, The Farm made the painful decision to end its residential services in order to put it's time and resources in the development of its family foster care program.

## 2000's

As we embark into the 21st century we entered into an era of privatization with a contractual relationship with the State of Kansas to provide an array of case management services to achieve permanency in a life of a child through family preservation, family reintegration and adoption. We truly became a state wide child welfare and behavioral health organization by starting up the Douglas County Visitation and Exchange program; providing numerous in-home family and substance abuse services; opening our first TRAIL on site case management supervised apartment living program for teens in Topeka, with development of additional sites in Wichita and Kansas City; and by expanding into child care and Montessori pre school services in Junction City, Lawrence and Kansas City. All the while, we continued to lead the state in the sponsorship of family foster care homes.

As we evolved into a state wide organization in order to develop programs to better serve Kansas families and children, we realized we were no longer that small rural agency in Northern Lyon called The Farm, Inc. but that we had grown into TFI Family Services, Inc.

**Building Brighter Tomorrows for Families and Children**