

# Northern Rivers Family of Services The Current

SPRING 2025

*Fostering a child* takes more than love—it takes a village. For Kobey and his husband, that village includes family, social workers, his Northern Rivers support team, and fellow foster parents, and that village has felt like home for a long time.

Kobey's journey as foster parent began five years ago, but the calling to care for children in need has been with him since before he was born. Both he and his mother were adopted, and now he and his husband are on the path to



adopting their foster daughter, who has been with them since she was just two days old.

The happy occasion brings Kobey back to that night five years ago when they welcomed the first foster children into their home, a five-year-old girl and her 18-month-old brother. "We didn't have anything we needed for older kids," Kobey remembers. "But when the call came, there was no hesitation."

Going from two to four overnight was a huge adjustment. Kobey credits resources like Northern Rivers' Foster Parent Connection groups for helping him through. "I'd call my on-call foster parent at 2 a.m. just to ask if what I was going through was normal," he says.

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# NORTHERN RIVERS

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## Bill's Current... cares

May is an especially busy time at Northern Rivers. It's Mental Health Month and Foster Care Month, and we're focusing on both finding loving foster homes throughout our community and promoting the importance of mental health services.



This month also brings a new NYS budget, which has a huge impact on our programs, services and operations. Many of you joined us in advocating for a 7.8% investment in Human Services, and we truly appreciate your calls, emails, and other expressions of support. We didn't get everything we asked for, but your support ensured that our sector was recognized.

*Invest*  
**7.8%**

If that's not enough, we've got new programs and locations opening, the end of the school year coming, and a big splash on the horizon (we'll tell you more about that soon!). We hope you'll enjoy reading a little more about what's happening in our world—things that your support makes possible.

**William T. Gettman Jr.**  
Chief Executive Officer

### CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER

What would Kobey say now as a veteran foster parent? Lean on your support system, be open about your experiences, and remember that building trust takes time. "Rely on your village, share your experiences, and give your foster child the time and space they need to feel safe," he says.

*Today*, he and his husband are passionate advocates for foster care and are open to growing their family again—whether for a short time or forever. "We're just excited to be part of these kids' stories, however long they stay."





### Thank You, County Waste & Recycling!

Our friends at County Waste & Recycling of NY generously donated 60 bikes for the children at the Early Learning Center. We're excited to see those bikes getting plenty of use now that spring is here!



### A Legacy of Care at Miriam House

We reopened our Miriam and Healy Residential Homes in January following a transformative \$3 million renovation. The ribbon-cutting celebration was filled with special guests, but the presence of longtime supporter and namesake Miriam "Mim" Butzel made the day especially meaningful.



### The Early Learning Center Celebrates Dr. King's Legacy with Help from Target

A big thank you to our friends at Target for providing a grant for our Early Learning Center to host their annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. event, honoring the life, legacy, and work of Dr. King.

This year's theme? Mission Possible: *Spread Love!*



### Love in Bloom at the Greenhouse

This Valentine's Day, our students shared the love by selling beautiful bouquets made from flowers they grew themselves at the Bella Greenhouse and Educational Center. From planting seeds to watching them bloom, students had the unique opportunity to engage in hands-on learning.



*Northern Rivers Family of Services*

# The Current

“When you’ve had  
a **FOSTER CHILD**,  
that’s when your  
whole world  
opens up.”



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