**50 Years at Foothills Gateway: Partners in Service**

*It has been said that you are only as good as your team. This sentiment proves especially true when we consider the vast “team” of Program Approved Service Agencies (PASAs) who partner with Foothills Gateway to provide important services and supports for people with disabilities in Larimer County. Today, we share thoughts from a few of these PASAs on why these partnerships are so valuable to all of us in the Foothills Gateway family.*

**Mosaic – Northern Colorado (*Sally Montgomery, Executive Director*)**

Happy 50th Anniversary!  Mosaic has been a part of the service provider community for 42 years, so we have enjoyed a long history of partnership with Foothills Gateway (FGI).  People who work in services for the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) community often joke that Larimer County is Utopia.  This stems from the trust and respect service agencies have for, and with, Foothills Gateway.  When problems arise, FGI has always been willing to work on resolving whatever it is to assure the person receiving services has what they need. Establishing that as the most important thing is what builds trust and achieves great outcomes.  As the Community Center Board (CCB), FGI has long challenged our community to be inclusive.  FGI has also worked diligently to solve systemic issues by creating relationships in the community.  A great example of this is the relationship with Summitstone Health Partners which assures people with IDD can access mental health care.   As a provider, it also helps us meet regulation and assure the quality of the care provided.  Another example is the recent agreement with Larimer County to act as the Child Placement Agency for CHRP services.  Very few CCBs have taken that level of initiative to get services moving for the folks who need it.  The Case Management Directors also take care to build and maintain relationships with Program Approved Service Agencys (PASAs) and that creates the trust necessary to get work done.  I appreciate the longevity of the team at FGI and the continuity that it brings to people in our community.  The partnership Mosaic enjoys with FGI has greatly contributed to our own continuity and ability to keep the focus on the individuals and families that need support, instead of system issues and community challenges.  We are fortunate to be a part of the PASA community serving Larimer County.  I am looking forward to Mosaic's continued work with FGI to meet the changing needs of people and families in Northern Colorado.

**Nick’s Hope LLC (*Sharon Roussos, Director*)**

When our story began in 2008, Nick’s Hope LLC was born as a “Micro board” which was something like a mini-PASA. Several years prior, a cubby hole had been created by the State DDD folks to accommodate a handful of families who decided that forming their own agency to exclusively serve the needs of a family member would be in everyone’s best interest. This was a somewhat new phenomena in the Foothills Gateway catchment area. Nick’s Hope was accepted rapidly into the fold of local PASAs, and numerous saints came to the rescue by sharing counsel on how to avoid sinking under the weight of mounds of relentless paperwork in unfamiliar territory. Being embraced by Foothills Gateway, our Community Centered Board, meant a great deal in the course of those early years, as this was a new learning curve for all of us. Thinking back, I can’t count the times I was reminded by families in other parts of the state about our good fortune to be working under such a progressive CCB. Over the years, my client has been fortunate to have enjoyed continuity of experienced Case Management, which has certainly helped to make for a smoother journey. Now a PASA, Nick’s Hope is grateful for the encouragement and support that has helped keep our ship floating over the roughest of waters. It is particularly poignant to me personally, that 50 years ago I was in the position of being a State spokesperson who attended the earliest United Way fundraiser events (I seem to recall being kissed by a dolphin that was performing in an above ground pool... or perhaps my memory could use some refreshing)! Who would’ve guessed that years later, my own family member would be served by the subsequent entity that would be known as Foothills Gateway.

If faith has its way, the twists and turns of life should circle us back to the happy, positive things. If hope has its way, we should never stop seeking such things. With gratitude and goodwill, all of us at Nick’s Hope wish continued success to the mission of Foothills Gateway. May the dedication and resolve of every team member who is part of the past, present, and future, be celebrated! Congratulations and please carry on doing good work for many!

**Altra Services, Inc. (*Ashley DeLuca, Associate Director*)**

Altra Services, Inc. is a local PASA in Northern Colorado.  Our specialty is working with adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and finding individuals “the perfect fit” in a home where they can grow and become their best person.  We have been working with Foothills Gateway for the past 27 years and have enjoyed working with everyone at Foothills Gateway, our local CCB.  Being able to depend on our CCB for support makes our job easier, knowing that we have the support of people who are invested in each individual’s care.  We have made great teams with the support of Foothills Gateway’s case managers, both past and present.  Foothills Gateway’s Day Program has also offered several programs for individuals to learn the skills they need in order to seek community employment.  We have also had several individuals achieve and maintain gainful employment with the support of the Foothills Gateway team.  We look forward to the years to come and seeing how our relationship will grow and change to continue bringing people together with “just enough supports”.

**The Otero Corporation (*Jessie Otero, President*)**

When I first arrived in Northern Colorado, I was eager to learn about the services and supports provided to individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities. I was quickly directed to Foothill Gateway, Inc. I was introduced to the key management team, and everyone associated with Foothills Gateway. It didn’t take long for me to recognize the dedication, compassion, advocacy, care, and love that was provided from all levels in the provision of support to those in service. When we decided to start The Otero Corporation, we were overwhelmed with the support, guidance, encouragement, and shared resources we received from Foothills Gateway personnel.

I have experience working and contracting to provide services for people with IDD in 16 different states and can say without hesitation that Foothills Gateway is the absolute best when it comes to delivering what they promise, committing to seek out new resources and ways for service provision, and excellent communication from all within the organization. It has always felt that we are in this together and the combination of resources, expertise, and desire for successful outcomes can only benefit the recipients in the end.

In closure, when I think of Foothills Gateway, the first word to describe my experience would be:  **Exemplary -** ***Serving as a desirable model; representing the best of its kind.***