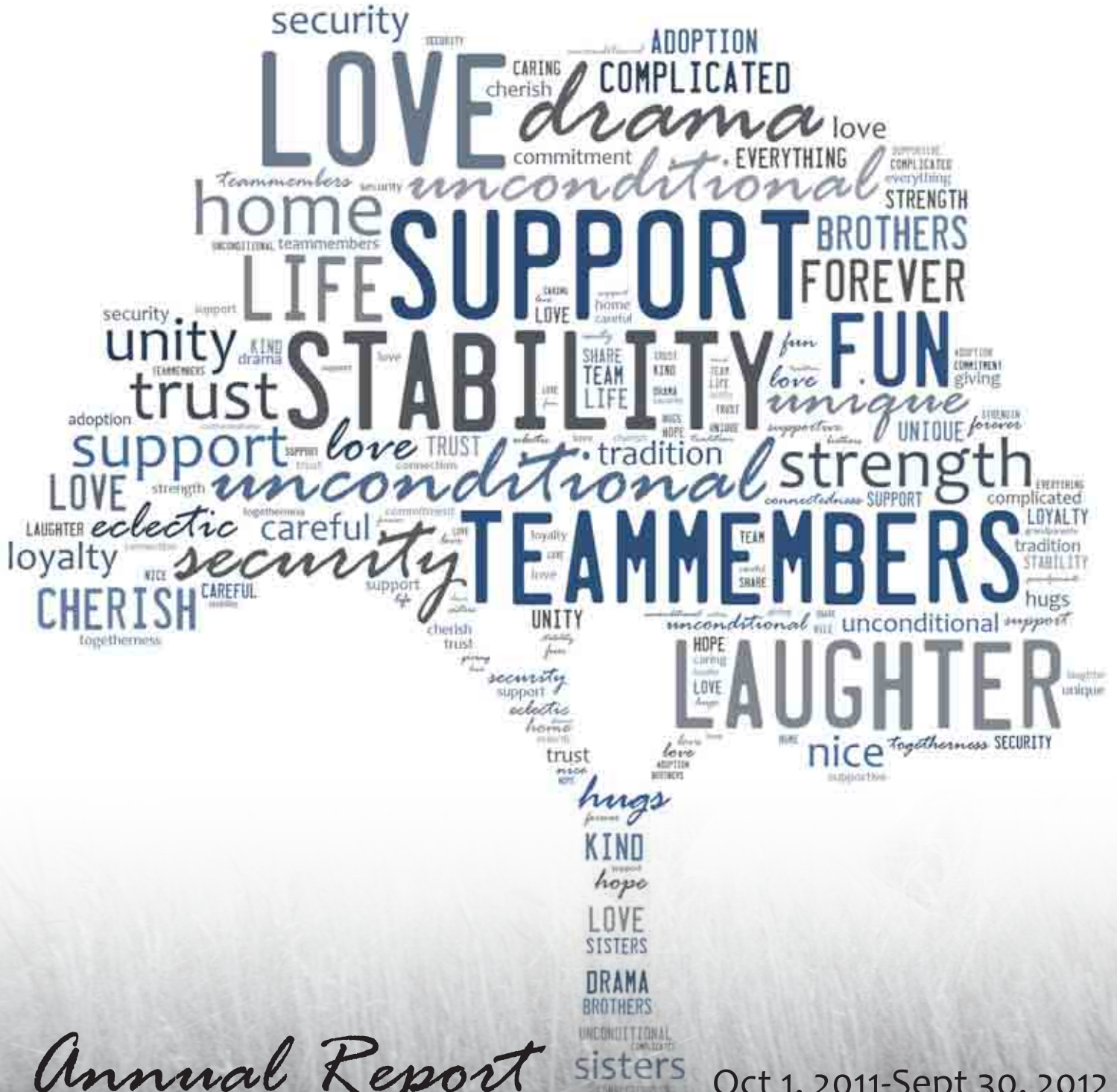


# Families First

In one word, what does **FAMILY** mean to YOU?



Annual Report

Oct 1, 2011-Sept 30, 2012

# From the Executive Director and Board President

*In one word, what does*  
**FAMILY** *mean to YOU?*

We asked our staff, volunteers and the children we serve this question. You will see their responses on the front cover and throughout the following pages.

When we began thinking about the words to describe our Families First family, we thought of *strength, support, resilience, connectedness* and *changing* - the same words that many of those asked used to describe their own families.

*Strength* - One of our strengths has been our ability to adjust to the needs of the community (our family) – a resilience that has kept us strong and a leader in our field for more than 26 years.

*Support* – With your support, we achieved a significant goal. In January 2012, we paid off our mortgage on the Family Center! Now that we are debt free, we can focus our resources on building our programs and services.

*Resilience* – Being resilient is having the ability to anticipate risk, limit its impact, and survive, adapt, evolve and grow in the face of chaotic change. It means working with challenges in such a way that one comes through it strong and better for the experience. It means facing life's difficulties with courage and patience – refusing to give up. It is the quality of character that allows you to rebound and grow. This quality is what we hope for the parents and children involved in our programs.

*Connectedness* – Connecting any parent willing to ask for help to resources in the community has always been one of our priorities. We knew these connections were changing and expanding in our society. To keep moving forward, we needed to take a good look at where we've been and where we need to be. A consistent claim of "you are the best kept secret in town for our services and support" was haunting and holding us back.

*Changing* - This past year has proven to be a year of significant change for our family. An internal audit with staff, volunteers and stakeholders uncovered a need to focus on community outreach and development of new partnerships (particularly with media and corporations) throughout Colorado. This outcome led to change....a restructuring of staff positions, including the need to hire a full time development director, to update current job descriptions, and to contract with a public relations firm to help us achieve our objective of a broader outreach in Colorado. All will result in getting our message to those who need it most.

At Families First, we have a clear sense of identity, purpose and family. We are resilient and hold fast to our vision of a community that empowers parents, nurtures children and strengthens families to end the cycle of child abuse and neglect. Together, we will continue providing services that protect children and make families strong.

Thank you for your support!



Mary Henemann  
Executive Director



Barbara Reece  
Board President

# Protective Factors for Healthy Families

Since 2003 the Strengthening Families Framework\* has been the foundation of Families First's approach to providing parents/caregivers with effective support and information. Research supports the common-sense notion that when these Protective Factors are well established in a family, the likelihood of child abuse and neglect diminishes. Research shows that these protective factors are also "promotive" factors that build family strengths and a family environment that promotes optimal child and youth development.

## Parental Resilience

**82% of parents who attended Circle of Parents® Groups and 87% who attended our Parenting Classes reported that they improved their problem solving skills and resilience during stress.**

No one can eliminate stress from parenting, but a parent's capacity for resilience can affect how a parent deals with stress. Resilience is the ability to manage and bounce back from all types of challenges that emerge in every family's life. It means finding ways to solve problems, building and sustaining trusting relationships including relationships with your own child and knowing how to seek help when necessary.

## Social Connections

**92% of parents who attended Circle of Parents® Groups and 91% who attended our Parenting Classes reported that they improved their social connections.**

Friends, family members, neighbors and community members provide emotional support, help solve problems, offer parenting advice and give concrete assistance to parents. Networks of support are essential to parents and also offer opportunities for people to "give back", an important part of self-esteem as well as a benefit for the community.

## Concrete Support in Times of Need

**73% of parents who attended Circle of Parents® Groups and 72% who attended our Parenting Classes reported that they improved access to community resources.**

Meeting basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing and health care is essential for families to thrive. Likewise, when families encounter a crisis such as domestic violence, mental illness or substance abuse, adequate services and supports need to be in place to provide stability, treatment and help for family members to get through the crisis. Our Support Line, 1-800-CHILDREN can serve as a first point of contact in connecting families to the resources they need.

## Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

**84% of parents who attended Circle of Parents® Groups and 96% who attended our Parenting Classes reported that they improved their parenting skills and knowledge of child development.**

Accurate information about child development and appropriate expectations for children's behavior at every age help parents see their children and youth in a positive light and promote their healthy development. Information can come from many sources, including family members as well as parent education classes and perusing the internet. Studies show information is most effective when it comes at the precise time parents need it to understand their own children.

## Child/Parent Nurturing and Attachment

**85% of parents who attended Circle of Parents® Groups and 91% who attended our Parenting Classes reported that they improved their nurturing skills and attachment.**

A child's early experience of being nurtured and developing a bond with a caring adult affects all aspects of behavior and development. When parents and children have strong, warm feelings for one another, children develop trust that their parents will provide what they need to thrive, including love, acceptance, positive guidance and protection.

*\*In 2001 the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) began researching the link between strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect to similar knowledge about quality early care and education. Through collaboration among the early childhood, child abuse prevention and child protective services sectors, the CSSP developed the Strengthening Families Framework - the evidence-based Protective Factors.*

# Empowering Parents

support **TEAM** commitment

## Family Support Line

Parents often need a listening ear to provide support, encouragement and resources when life is challenging. Our Family Support Line is the place Colorado parents can receive non-judgmental, supportive information and compassion to help them make good choices for their children and their families.

- 2,230 parents and professionals called 1-800-CHILDREN for information and support.
- 257 parents and professionals called 1-866-LAS-FAMILIAS, our Spanish Family Support Line.

## Internet Resources

We know that the majority of today's parents search for both information and social support on the internet. By increasing our presence on-line, parents have increased access to information and we are able to reach a wider audience without increasing our costs. Internet based resources allow parents to remain anonymous and the parents' perceived need for information can be effectively met anytime of day or night.

- Our Family Support Line Blog, *A Blog For Strengthening Families*, is posted on 11 sites and had 1,230 views.
- The Family Support Services page on our website was consistently one of the top five entry points for web visits.
- Over 3,370 visits to our website came directly through our Family Support Services page.
- We developed and launched our Spanish website, [consejosparafamilias.org](http://consejosparafamilias.org).

## SONIA'S STORY

Sonia called the Consejos para Familias Support Line looking for help for her 12 year old son Manuel, who didn't want to go to school. She could sense that he was scared to go but he wouldn't tell her why. She had tried many things to get him to open up and none of them seemed to work. She asked the support line worker if she could speak to Manuel in an effort to figure out what was going on.

In his conversation with the support line worker, Manuel said he liked many aspects of school but there were some things that were very hard for him. One of these was English class. His first language was Spanish and he was struggling to understand the lessons in school. Manuel received validation from the support line worker as she knew that learning a new language and adjusting to a new culture is not easy.

The support line worker talked to Sonia and explained the situation and encouraged her to make changes at home and to advocate for him at school. Sonia said she had no idea that this was going on and that this information helped her understand Manuel better and indicated that she would seek help for him right away.

A month later, during a follow up call, Sonia said that Manuel's behavior had changed greatly. He was going to school and liked it now. He enrolled in an after school program to help him learn English and it had helped him tremendously. His attitude about school had changed and his behavior at home had improved. Sonia credits the support line worker for helping her to understand Manuel's developmental stage

# 1-800-CHILDREN

which has helped both her and her husband communicate with him more effectively. Sonia ended the call by saying, "I encourage other parents to call 1-800-LAS-FAMILIAS and ask for help! You give great support!"



# Strengthening Families

togetherness *trust* FUN

## Education

Children are not born with an instruction manual and we've seen that many parents make good choices when given good information. Our parenting classes, seminars, massage instruction and conferences teach effective communication and disciplinary skills for parenting children from birth to adulthood.

- 581 parents attended classes and seminars covering topics including general parenting and specialized classes for parents of preschoolers, adolescents and teens. Classes are offered in English and Spanish.
- 84% of parents completed their class.
- 41 caregivers, grandparents and other kin, attended the Healthy Living, Mind, Body and Spirit conference where Families First is a cosponsor.

## Circle of Parents®

We know that when groups of parents come together and share frustrations and experiences, they don't feel alone in their struggles. Circle of Parents® is a national network of parent-led, self-help groups where parents can address the challenges of parenting.

- 177 parents attended Groups regularly (both English and Spanish).
- 10 Groups met regularly.

## Children's Groups

While their parents attended our groups and classes, **136** children attended our **Children's Groups**. We offer a structured children's program which provides fun activities and creative projects for the children. Our trained staff and experienced volunteers provide children with an opportunity to learn appropriate skills for socializing and self control.

## ERIC'S STORY

Eric admitted that he was having power struggles with his son, Jason, and turned to us for guidance. After class one night, when it was extremely cold outside, Jason resisted the demands to put his hood on. Eric forcefully insisted that Jason comply. When the young boy refused, his dad withdrew his privilege to have a story read that night. Jason had a meltdown and became combative. Two weeks later, after Eric learned about giving choices, he was overheard asking Jason if he wanted to walk to the bus stop or ride on his dad's shoulders. The boy chose a ride. His father enthusiastically stated that he would love to give him a ride and added that it was really cold on the top of his shoulders and if Jason put his hood on, Eric would lift him up. The young boy immediately put on his head gear and his dad scooped him up. The family walked out of the building happy and together. When Eric learned how to present acceptable options, Jason was willing to comply and the power struggle was over.

*"When we empower children through choice, they respond more positively."*

*Christina Dalpiay, Parent Educator*

An interesting part of this story is that Eric, when he was a small boy, lived in our Children's Treatment Center. Often the seeds that are planted early in life can lay dormant until the right elements nurture the experience and help them grow. Eric realized that his experience at Families First was important to him and when it was time, he returned to the home that had once made him feel safe looking for guidance. His desire to break the cycle of abuse was evident and he seemed enthusiastic and eager to be the best father he could be.

# Nurturing Children

laughter SECURITY *strength*

## Residential Treatment

Our residential Children's Treatment Center is a homelike environment that offers safety, healing and hope to young children who have been removed from their homes due to extreme child abuse and neglect. We are the only Colorado agency that accepts children under the age of five and offer one of the few placement options for severely abused children who are unsuccessful in foster placement or who are experiencing disrupted adoptions. We provide therapeutic care for a maximum of ten children at a time as well as the necessary pre-placement assessments, therapy and aftercare services to their families to ensure their success upon discharge when they are placed with their new families.

**Thirteen** children were served in 2011-2012

These children received:

- **693** hours of individual therapy
- **147** hours of group therapy
- **2,997** individual days of care
- **2** children returned to home of origin
- **3** children went to adoptive homes
- **8** children are still in placement with us.

## ALLIE'S STORY

Allie moved to Families First when she was six years old. She had learned a lot from her parents in her young life. You bathe in filling station bathrooms. You use drugs to stay calm. You discipline with fists. You eat what you can when you can. When your parents don't come home, you go out on the streets. Allie did what she could. She developed coping skills of extreme and unsettling behaviors - skills that helped her stay alive.

But for Allie to have a chance to be adopted she needed to learn something else, something she could learn at Families First - **how to be part of a family.**

For Allie this meant starting from square one. She needed to understand that she was now safe. Adults would make sure she had enough to eat and could sleep alone in a

*Learning how to be a part of a family*

warm bed. She would go to school each day and have consistent routines. She would have people and routines she could count on so she could begin to build trust. That took over half a year. Then the hard work began. Allie had to learn ...how to talk about her scary, angry feelings without having to act on them ...what positive relationships with others are ... what a normal family routine feels like ... what it feels like to be successful at school.

We're so proud of Allie. She did it!! She worked hard, is doing well in school and at eight years old is ready for us to find her a forever family.

**WE HAVE IMPACTED THE  
LIVES OF 8,988 CHILDREN**

# Our Family of Support

cherish unity *Love*  
SHARE *commitment* KIND

## COLLABORATIONS

### Denver-Metro Area

Annunciation Catholic School  
Aurora Community Connections  
Aurora Mental Health  
Brady Exploration School  
Cherry Creek Schools  
Denver Public Library  
Douglas County Parenting  
Coalition  
Evanston United Methodist Church  
First Denver Friends Church  
Godsman Elementary School, DPS  
Jefferson Center for Mental Health  
Littleton First Presbyterian Church  
Mt. Loretto, Archdiocesan Housing  
Rocky Mountain Parents as  
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St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church  
University of Denver School of  
Professional Psychology

### Outside of Denver-Metro Area

Sterling Family Resource Center  
Tri County Family Care Center

### State-wide

The Adoption Exchange  
Advocates for Recovery  
Colorado Association of Family and  
Children's Agencies  
Colorado Children's Justice Act  
Task Force  
Colorado Department of Human  
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Colorado Drug Endangered  
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Colorado Post Adoption Resource  
Center  
County Departments of Human  
Services  
Prevent Child Abuse Colorado  
Substance Exposed Newborns

### National

Circle of Parents®

## FRIENDS FOR FAMILIES FIRST

Friends for Families First is a special group of volunteers and supporters who embrace the vision of creating a community that nurtures children and strengthens families. Members help the Governing Board and staff accomplish our mission by recruiting volunteers, raising funds and promoting awareness in the community.

This year, Friends for Families First:

- recruited **270** members
- raised **\$227,000** through special events
- contributed over **1,500** hours of volunteer time
- provided birthday dinner, cake, gifts and monthly homemade cookies for the **13** children living at the Children's Treatment Center
- decorated the inside of the Children's Treatment Center for the holidays.

## YP4FF

Young Professionals for Families First (YP4FF) is a group of young parents, professionals and emerging leaders whose purpose is to create awareness of Families First through fun, networking events with the long-term goal developing lifetime supporters.

In their inaugural year, YP4FF hosted **3 events** including a volunteer work day, a baseball game and a concert.

## PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are an integral part of our organization. They provide direct care to abused and neglected children at the Children's Treatment Center, information and referral sources to callers through our Family Support Line and Consejos Para Familias, help plan and implement children's activities for our Children's Groups, facilitate our support groups, teach our education classes and help set the overall direction for our program services.

In 2011-2012, **52** program volunteers contributed over **2,461 hours**.



# Annual Donors

Love STABILITY *connection*

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UNIQUE *supportive* laughter

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*everything* HOME forever

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LOYALTY *security* LOVE

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## *Groups and Organizations*

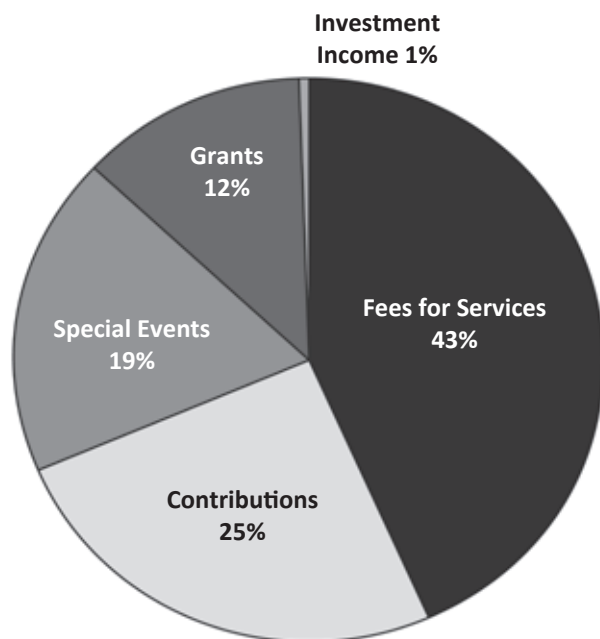
Assumption Greek Orthodox  
Cathedral of Denver CO  
United Church of Christ  
Girl Scout Troop #4327  
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*\*Board Member*

*In compiling this report, every effort was made to ensure accuracy. If there are omissions, misspellings or other errors, please inform us at 303 745-0327.*

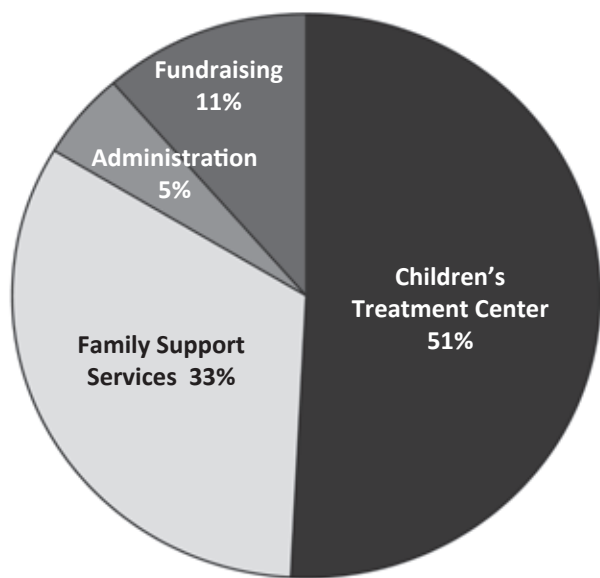


# 2012 Financial Profile *Tradition GIVING adoption*



## Revenue and Support

Fees for Services	\$514,118
Contributions	\$298,833
Special Events	\$219,467
Grants	\$145,500
Investment Income	\$6,080
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,183,998</b>



## Expenses

Program Services	
Children's Treatment Center	\$637,396
Family Support Services	\$407,567
Support	
Administration	\$63,873
Fundraising	\$140,453
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,249,289</b>
Change in Net Assets	(\$65,291)

## Net Assets

Beginning of Year	\$2,645,253
End of Year	\$2,579,962

*When the children living at the Children's Treatment Center were asked "In one word, what does family mean to you?" They responded with: nice, love, brothers, sisters, share, caring, love, kind and forever.*

# Our Leadership *commitment* EMPOWERING life

## MISSION STATEMENT

To end the cycle of child abuse and neglect by providing resources to empower parents, nurture children and strengthen families. We respond to the needs of all families with an approach that is welcoming and collaborative.

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Peter Urdiales

love commitment *Team* unconditional connection *empowering* home  
supportive together nessteammembers NURTURING LIFE

# Thank you for joining us in creating a community where all children are safe and cared for.

At Families First, we are guided by what is in the best interest of children. We believe children thrive in enduring and safe relationships with adults and are entitled to a place in a healthy, nurturing family. We believe that all parents benefit from tools and resources to help them nurture, bond with and discipline their children in a healthy and effective way. We believe in children and we believe in families.



*In one word, what does FAMILY mean to YOU?*