Families First

ANNUAL REPORT
October 1, 2013-September 30, 2014

“My family broke the cycle.”
-Sienna

“I broke the cycle.”
-Todd

“I broke the cycle.”
-Eli

“My family broke the cycle.”
-Karime
To my friends in the Families First community,

Although I did not know it at the time, I was first exposed to civic engagement when I was about 8 years old. My mom would drive me, almost on a weekly basis, to a home that kids my age lived in. My memory of the home was that it was pretty and happy, and had an awesome playground. I do not remember at first asking her why we went there; it was just something we did as a family.

As the years went by, I continued to visit the house with my mom. I helped fix up things like the sand box, and I grew to understand that the kids who lived there were there because their parents needed some help learning how to be better parents to their children, and that the children were there because they needed love, support, consistency, and guidance that they may not have gotten from their parents. I learned that it was Families First.

As I became more aware of Families First and what those parents and children were facing, I developed an ache for the tragedy and joy of civic engagement. The tragedy of lives, especially children’s lives who are at the mercy of strangers to help them, is almost too much to bear at times, but the joy of helping to better those lives is a joy that nothing else in life can replicate. In 2005, I joined the Governing Board of Families First and now I have the honor of writing to you on behalf of the organization as Board President.

Families First is important in our community. It is long-standing, special, and fills an important space for care and direction to parents and children at a time when they have nowhere else to turn. It affects generations, families, and lives. In the past five years, twelve Families First children were adopted into their forever homes, four were returned to their families, and over 20,000 parents received our help and support to be better parents to their kids through Families First’s classes and programming. Those are real lives that we have changed. From Families First, kids have learned how to trust and be loved, and parents have learned how to be the best parents they can be.

Of course, none of it could happen without your heartfelt efforts and commitment to Families First. As I think about Families First, it strikes me that, just as the organization has a long-term impact on the people it serves, our organization is unique in that it inspires long-standing commitment and support from people and families like you and yours. There are few organizations that have so many supporters who have given so many years and even generations to its mission of breaking the cycle of child abuse.

I want our community to know this and what all of us have accomplished. I want others to support and share in our vision. I want this next year to be the year of visibility for Families First. I ask all of you to join me in focusing harder than ever on giving Families First the voice, visibility, and notoriety in our community that matches the impact Families First has on the community. We do not want Families First to be a well-kept secret; we want to be LOUD, because we are the voices of the children, and the louder we are, the more joy we will bring into the little lives that are depending on us.

My warmest thanks to you for your continued support and here’s to a great, loud, and joyful year!

Katie DeBord
Governing Board President

“We would like to thank the women who so generously shared their stories in our “Break the Cycle” video. It was an honor to work with each of you and we are grateful to know that Families First played such an important role in your life. Your stories have not only inspired us, but have changed our lives forever. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your journey and for sharing it with the world.” ~ Rachel and the Staff at Families First

I don’t think in my case I would have ever been able to end my own cycle of abuse.

“Breaking the Cycle for abused children”

Our residential Children’s Treatment Center is a home-like 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.

To hear more of Briana and her sister Chrissy’s story, visit: www.familiesfirstcolorado.org/video.html

Briana, a former resident

Families First  •  2163 S Yosemite Street, Denver, CO 80231  •  303-745-0327  •  www.FamiliesFirstColorado.org
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 and conferences teach effective communication and disciplinary skills for parenting children from birth to adulthood.

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.

While their parents attend our groups and classes, children attend 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.

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.

“Families First provided me with a real life example of how to accomplish my goals and my dreams.” -Chandra, a Parent

To hear more of Chandra’s story, visit: www.familiesfirstcolorado.org/video.html
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 242 members
- raised $196,000 through special events
- contributed over 1,516 hours of volunteer time
- provided birthday dinner, cake, gifts and monthly homemade cookies for the 12 children living at the Children’s Treatment Center
- decorated the inside of the Children’s Treatment Center and Family Center for the holidays

Every year, the membership of FRIENDS for Families First selects two individuals who have gone above and beyond over the past year. We are excited to announce the recipients of this year’s awards: Heather Garbers (left) and Janelle Endres (right)! Heather received our first ever “Most Active New Member Award” and Janelle received the “President’s Award.” Congratulations ladies, and thank you for your hard work and commitment to Families First.
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Johnson & Johnson Matching Gifts Program
Latitude Sports Marketing/WOW Events Denver
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MKD Real Estate Inc
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**Groups and Organizations**

Bryan Cave HRO Community Involvement  
Chapter BF P.E.O.  
Girl Scout Troop 4327  
National Charity League  
Rocky Mountain Chapter  
Sky Vista Middle School  
Society of St. Clare  
St Andrews Lutheran Church  
Endowment Fund  
Templerline Elementary School  
USC Alumni Club of Colorado  

*Member of FY14 Board of Directors  

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.
**To see some of our volunteers in action, visit:**  www.familiesfirstcolorado.org/video.html

**Our Financial Profile**

"Families First was the first time I ever felt normal as a child...they helped me to know that nothing [I experienced] was my fault."

-Chrissy, a former resident

To hear more of Chrissy and her sister Briana's story, visit:  www.familiesfirstcolorado.org/video.html

**Revenue and Support**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fees for Services</td>
<td>$537,032</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$171,225</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>$146,092</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>$135,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$17,027</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,006,876</strong></td>
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**Expenses**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Services</td>
<td>$684,978</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Support Services</td>
<td>$398,644</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Support Administration</strong></td>
<td><strong>$76,766</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fundraising</strong></td>
<td><strong>$57,491</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,217,879</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Net Assets**

- Beginning of Year: $2,448,814
- End of Year: $2,237,811

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**COLLABORATIONS**

**Denver-Metro Area**
- Adams 12 Five Star Schools
- Adams County School District 14
- Annunciation Catholic School
- Archdiocesan Housing
- Aurora Mental Health
- Betty Ford Children’s Program
- Brady Exploration School
- Cherry Creek Schools
- Decatur Place
- Denver Public Schools
- Douglas County Projecting Coalition
- Evanston Center for Spiritual Wholeness and Healing
- First Denver Friends Church
- Knights of Columbus
- Littleton First Presbyterian Church
- Littleton Public Schools
- MINA - International Ministry
- Eagles Nest

**Outside of Denver-Metro Area**
- Monkey Bizness
- National Organization for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
- North Metro Community Services
- Regis University
- Rocky Mountain Parents as Teachers
- Savio House
- Sheridan School District
- St. Gabriel’s Episcopal Church
- University of Denver School of Professional Psychology
- Warren Village

**State-wide**
- The Adoption Exchange
- Colorado Association of Family and Children's Agencies
- Colorado Children’s Justice Task Force
- Colorado Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families
- Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Behavioral Health, Special Connections
- Colorado Alliance for Drug Endangered Children
- County Departments of Human Services
- Prevent Child Abuse Colorado
- Substance Exposed Newborns

**National**
- Circle of Parents*

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**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, offer 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. The forty-four volunteers listed below contributed 2,550 volunteer hours this year!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norma Alder Kovacs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharon Bair</td>
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<td>Brenda Baker</td>
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<td>Harry Baker</td>
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<td>Sarah Blais</td>
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<td>Alecia Brown</td>
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<td>Fred Buschhoff</td>
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<td>Morgan Cali</td>
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<td>Caroline Castruita</td>
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<td>Jane Diamond</td>
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<td>Tammy Duffy</td>
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<td>Aileen Duran</td>
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<td>Emma Eagen</td>
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<td>Brian Firooz</td>
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<td>Melissa Garcia</td>
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<td>Cindy Geiger</td>
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<td>Shelly Goss</td>
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<td>Dora Hernandez</td>
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<td>Sarah Hite</td>
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<td>Cathy Hollis</td>
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<td>Aurora Hunt</td>
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<td>Alicia Ingram</td>
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<td>Calla Lawless</td>
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<td>Barbara Lewis</td>
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<td>Karime Lopez</td>
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<td>Judy Marturano</td>
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<td>Patty Michael</td>
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<td>Samantha Mitton</td>
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* to be added later
**Mission Statement**

To provide services which strengthen families, empower parents, nurture children and end the cycle of child abuse and neglect.

**BREAKING the Cycle for COLORADO**