

Better Tomorrows

An Annual Stewardship Publication of Family & Children's Center **2015**

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Family & Children's Center
Better Tomorrows Start With Us

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Changes for Good

At Family & Children’s Center, we believe in long-term change. We believe that with the proper evidence-based programs, children and families can have better tomorrows—not just for a few months or even a few years, but for good.

The center saw many changes last year. Our community support program expanded under a new regional model. We received a \$2 million challenge gift to kick off our ten-year sustainability project for our child abuse prevention programs, and we said goodbye to Mike Boehm, CEO and president of Family & Children’s Center from 2012-2014.

Throughout the year, we also saw many lives change for good. From the adolescent who needed a mom to the teen that became one herself, the stories in this report illustrate that for most who come to Family & Children’s Center, everything changes when they walk through our doors.

These changes would not be possible without the generous, compassionate support we receive from people like you. We thank you for your goodness in making positive, lasting changes in the lives of those we serve and in the communities we share.



With gratitude,
Laura Eddy
Laura Eddy
Board Chair

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Better Tomorrows

Better Tomorrows is published annually by Family & Children’s Center for friends and supporters of our mission. To learn more about the center’s services and community impact, or to inquire about making a charitable gift, please visit us at fconline.org or call the Development Office at (608) 785-0001 ext. 235.

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Allergy Associates of La Crosse

Holiday Gifts Change Lives for Good

Allergy Associates of La Crosse, Ltd., and Family & Children’s Center have a lot in common. Both focus on children and families, both take more difficult cases and both seek to find the underlying cause of problems in order to prevent future troubles. They share a common goal: to ensure clients won’t need to return for additional services. Both exist to change the course of people’s lives.

Considering the parallels, it was an easy decision to support Family & Children’s Center, says Jeff Kessler, practice executive at Allergy Associates. The center approached him five years ago to invite the company to become part of True Blue, a program where businesses share a portion of proceeds with Family & Children’s Center.

Kessler saw it as a match; so did employees. Wanting to make internal holiday gift-giving more meaningful, they redirected funds they would have used to purchase gifts for one another to Family & Children’s Center’s programs that give better tomorrows to area kids.

In its first four years, the program raised \$10,045. Last year, its fifth, the Morris Family Foundation matched the contributions—increasing funds to-date for the program to \$16,046.

“My dad has always been a big supporter of community causes. When he gets behind something, you know it’s important,” says Mary Morris, MD, president and owner of Allergy Associates and daughter of Sacia and Dr. David Morris who founded the company.



Mary Morris, MD and David Morris, MD

Sacia had toured Family & Children’s Center and was surprised at the level of need. “There was no question about supporting FCC. If my parents support it, then it must be good,” adds Morris.

Allergy Associates kicks off the fundraising at its holiday party each year. “We put the goal out

there and people respond,” says Kessler. “When we educate employees about what Family & Children’s Center does, they’re surprised. We all feel fortunate to have FCC in the area.”

The giving spirit is contagious, he adds. “You get a sense of satisfaction from giving. If you really get involved, the stats come to life.”

Thousands of children and families can attest to that. The overall funds raised since 2010 have been enough to help sustain three of Family & Children’s Center’s programs that focus on helping families facing adversity to ultimately prevent child abuse.

Like Family & Children’s Center, “we believe in approaching problems to gain awareness of and treat the cause. That’s how you get long-term, sustainable change,” says Kessler. “We will be supporting Family & Children’s Center for a long time to come.”



Liam's Story

Respect and Responsibility Point Troubled Teen to Better Tomorrows

Liam* grew up in a world with neither respect nor responsibility. Living alternately in La Crosse and Chicago, Liam was a link in the perpetuating chain of crime and poverty—panhandling and stealing for food and money as his transitory mom prostituted herself for her own survival. Hanging out in the streets and with gangs was just a way of life.

At age ten, the only mother figure in Liam's life, his aunt, passed away and Liam and his siblings returned to live with his mom in Chicago.

About a year later, in La Crosse, Liam's mom told her children to get in the car. "She said she was taking us for a drive somewhere," recalls Liam. "We went straight downtown—to La Crosse County [Human Services]—and she left us there."

The county placed him in a series of foster homes, but Liam only knew one way to live. While living in the last of those homes, he and his friends robbed three houses and his foster parents' medicine cabinet, stealing pills to sell at school.

"I was raised in Chicago where you steal. You bring that here and you get in trouble," says Liam reflecting on the year he subsequently spent in a juvenile detention center. "It was a wakeup call."

Upon his release, Liam moved into a different kind of home: the Family & Children's Center

Treatment Foster Care home of Larry and Carol Callaway. TFC parents are specially equipped to help very troubled children.

"Everything changed there.

Larry kept it 100

percent real. He would tell you how it is. I respected him," says Liam, noting that it perhaps was the first time he felt respected himself. "That was the first time I got that consistently."

He attended high school at GET (Gale-Ettrick-Trempealeau) where he joined the wrestling team and was introduced to welding. When he graduated, he became the first in his family to earn a high school diploma.

"It's all about the environment, how they mold you. I can now be a man," says Liam. "Carol taught me

Everything changed there. Larry kept it 100 percent real. He would tell you how it is. I respected him.



responsibility. She taught me how to do me. She tells me I make her proud. She loves me."

Between the Callaways and his TFC respite home, Liam learned how to get a job, manage money and bank accounts, even how to do his taxes. He learned responsibility as well as respect.

After graduating, Liam went to Job Corps in Milwaukee where he trained in welding and manufacturing. When he finished, he returned to Chicago to stay with his biological family and find a job—immersing himself in his old way of life.

His family there took advantage of him. One uncle used him as a drug runner and took out student and car loans in Liam's name, though Liam never got the education or the car. To cope with the stress, Liam turned again to drugs, including Xanax bars and School Boy (codeine).

Through it all, however, Liam knew he could do better. He knew he deserved respect, that a better life awaited him. Drawing on what he learned in Treatment Foster Care with Family & Children's Center, he left Chicago and the

problems that came with it.

"I think it was the right choice," he says. "I have one brother locked up. Another brother on a bracelet."

Liam stayed with the Callaways, and Carol helped him find a job. With his first paycheck, he bought gifts for his TFC families. Today, he lives with one of his foster brothers from the Callaways. He is in the process of looking for a second job, so he can more quickly pay down the debts his uncle took in his name and go to WTC to get an official welding certification.

"The lessons I learned at Family & Children's Center are going to help me in life," says Liam. "I realize now that I've got to respect people. I've got to go to work and do what I need to do."

**Name changed to protect privacy.*



Transforming Lives Across the Region: La Crosse

A Step in the Right Direction: Collaborating to Change the Conversation Around Mental Illness in Our Community

The majority of Family & Children's Center's programs work with individuals living with a mental health concern, many with specific mental illness diagnoses. Mental illness crosses all boundaries, affecting people of all ages, ethnicities and socio economic strata. In fact, about one in four of us will experience a mental illness at some point in our lives.

During last year's Mental Illness Awareness Week, established by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, FCC planned a creative community awareness campaign in La Crosse to spread the word about mental illness. The *I am 1 in*

4 campaign was designed to help reduce – and ultimately eliminate – the negative stigma that typically comes with mental illness.

The most notable component to the campaign was the “green person” appearances around town. The green person symbolized those living with mental illness, many who are silently struggling. Volunteers dressed in a green morph suit made appearances at the grocery store, mall, Rotary clubs and restaurants around town.

This year when La Crosse became the first community outside of Washington D.C. to

launch The Campaign to Change Direction, FCC saw an opportunity to continue the conversation. The Campaign to Change Direction is a nationwide initiative to create a new story about mental health. Members from FCC joined the steering committee with members of other community organizations committed to increasing support for those living with mental illness and reducing the negative stigma related to it.

FCC has also committed to providing mental health first aid training to all FCC staff and is now expanding efforts to offer the training to other community organizations.

Since the 2014 campaign, the National Institute of Mental Health now states that in America, 1 in 5 individuals over the age of 13 will experience a serious mental illness.



Weston Youth Home Adds Crisis Bed

FCC's Weston Youth Home provides 24-hour care for youth ages 12-17 with emotional, behavioral and academic challenges. Participants are engaged in a relationship-based treatment approach incorporating a progressive motivational system based on trauma-informed care philosophies.

Earlier this year, the youth home began a partnership with the Tri-County region—La Crosse, Monroe and Jackson counties—and the La Crosse County Mobile Crisis Unit, to add crisis-stabilization beds. The beds provide an option for community youth in crisis; for example, a youth who is at-risk of hurting themselves or others.

Meet a Treatment Foster Care Family

Anne Sawvell and Larry Hass reached out to Family & Children's Center when they first became interested in foster care. The two have now been providing care for children through FCC for nearly three years. They currently have two foster children in their care full-time.



Anne & Larry

FCC's Treatment Foster Care program provides the structure and support needed for children to live in a family environment when they are unable to live with their own families. The program's social workers provide intensive, specialized support and advocacy for each family and child in placement.

Anne and Larry got started with FCC's program because they were looking for a way to support the community. “It's just really nice to have an impact on a life,” says Anne. “My philosophy on life is to try to make the world a better place. With the option of foster care, you can make the world a better place one

The crisis bed program offers these youth a short break to deescalate from their crisis and develop goals moving forward to reintegrate back into their everyday life. The program also assists the youths' parents to help them better meet the needs of their child.

Ideally, the youth continue to attend their home school while placed at the Youth Home to help them adapt while they are also surrounded by a safe, structured environment until they are stabilized.

child at a time. We decided to step up to the plate.”

Larry adds that a huge benefit to providing foster care is getting to share in the successes of the children as they learn new life skills.

Anne and Larry point out the support they receive from FCC's social workers is what enables them to keep going. “It feels like a close-knit family,” says Anne. “They really care about the kids. They are not just case numbers, they are actual kids that they know and want to help.”

Larry adds, “We want them to grow up to be happy, safe and healthy and to be successful.”

“Our fingerprints never fade on the lives that we touch.”

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about becoming a Treatment Foster Care home through

FCC, please call 785-0001 ext. 350. All foster parents receive competitive compensation, flexible schedules, training and other ongoing support.

Transforming Lives Across the Region: Winona

New Service to Help Keep Families Together and Strong

After a child has been placed in out-of-home care, reunification with parents can be difficult. Often everyone involved in the child protection case wants the same outcome, but getting to a common ground is difficult when there are many voices to hear and laws to interpret.

To help navigate these difficult conversations, FCC began offering Family Group Conferencing for families through Matty's Place Children's Advocacy Center. A trained facilitator works with families to plan a meeting or series of meetings in which all identified parties come together for a common goal: the safety of their children. During the meeting the facilitator assists objectively, making sure family members' voices are heard and a realistic and effective plan can be put together to support the family's goals.



The facilitator helps parents meet certain goals while their children are placed in out-of-home care in order to ultimately return the children to their parents' care.

The meetings can consist of the individual family or caregivers, their informal supports such as parents, other relatives, friends or neighbors, and formal supports such as a child protection worker and mental health case manager.

In one case the program was able to help a family develop a transition plan for moving two young children back home to their mother. The children had previously been placed in FCC's Treatment Foster Care program because their mother struggles with mental health issues and was unable to manage her own symptoms.

The plan outlined when the children would transition home and filled gaps such as child care for the mother's psychiatric appointments. The plan has been followed successfully thus far and FCC staff continue to follow-up with the mother for constant support.

Winona Offers More Services for Struggling Adults

FCC is now an adult rehabilitative mental health services (ARMHS) provider in Winona, Minnesota for adults living with severe and persistent mental illness. ARMHS offers a community-based model enabling participants to develop and enhance psychiatric stability, social competencies and independent living and community skills when these abilities are impaired by the mental illness symptoms. Anyone with a diagnosed mental illness and on medical assistance can receive help from ARMHS.

More specifically the program can instruct, assist and support

a participant with medication education and monitoring along with basic social and living skills in mental illness symptom management, household management, employment or transitioning to community living. ARMHS services are provided in a recipient's home, job site or other community location. ARMHS providers can go wherever the clients need them to be.

ARMHS can be very helpful to those at risk of losing functionality. Its ultimate goal is to prevent the need for a psychiatric hospital stay.

FCC began providing these services to give consumers another option for an ARMHS provider in Winona.

ARMHS also allows FCC to provide more after-care support to those transitioning from Hiawatha Hall, FCC's residential facility for adults living with severe and persistent mental illness.

So far the program feedback has been positive. Clients say they feel supported by the ARMHS staff and are always asking for more time with staff.

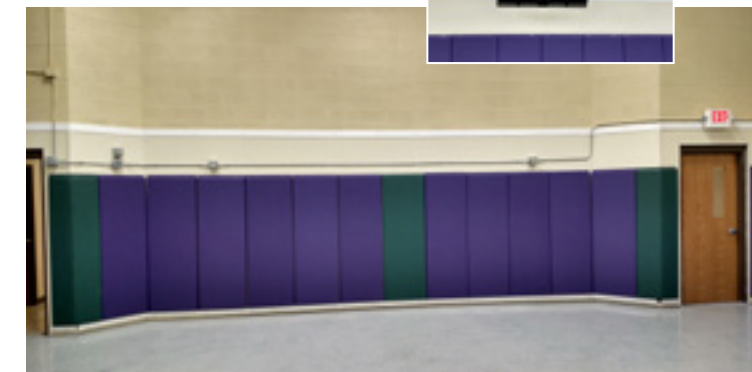
Physical Fitness Aids in Mental Health Recovery

Earlier this year, Family & Children's Center was able to unveil an indoor recreational space for youth ages three to 17 served in programs at the Franklin Street facility in Winona. The rec space was made possible by a generous donor who recognizes the importance of physical activity and how it can aid in mental health recovery.

The space is used for group activities such as parachute and bean bag games to build team cooperation skills; basketball games to offer team building skills and teach the youth fun and appropriate leisure skills; and tag games to work on understanding and maintaining proper personal boundaries. The space is also used by staff and clients as an extra space to connect or talk about things that are bothering them without the pressure

of feeling like they have to talk, which is often a fear when entering a traditional therapy office.

Many of FCC's day treatment programs use the space to help the kids exert energy while learning coping skills. The space is vital to have during the winter months when it is too cold to be outside.



The space is available to a wide variety of clients after normal programming hours. Parents and children can access it during a supervised visit at Matty's Place or during a foster parent training session or support group. FCC's adult clients living with a mental illness will also use the space for relaxation and meditation sessions. When the space is not being used by clients, it is available for staff wellness activities.

Hiawatha Hall Planning for New Facility

Family & Children's Center's Hiawatha Hall is a residential facility for adults living with a mental illness or substance abuse challenges. The program prepares residents to move into independent living and towards recovery.

The hall's residents engage in activities that encourage the growth of skills necessary for healthy, self-sufficient lives. Most residents stay at Hiawatha Hall for an average of 90 days.

Unfortunately, the current building used for Hiawatha Hall doesn't provide a very therapeutic atmosphere for treatment services for our clients. It has become very old and dilapidated. Late in 2014, FCC began searching for a new facility. After reviewing numerous properties, FCC decided to purchase land and build a new facility to meet the specific needs of the clients we serve.

FCC hopes to have the home built and fully functional by the beginning of 2017. The new facility will feature

10 regular beds and two crisis beds; an upgrade from eight regular beds and one crisis bed in the current facility. In the new facility, supervising and ensuring safety for clients will be much easier. While there will be more space for groups and shared living spaces, the new design will also increase privacy for clients.



Transforming Lives Across the Region: Black River Falls, Sparta, & Viroqua

Jammin' at The Other Door

The Other Door drop-in center in Viroqua has been offering a safe, substance-free place for individuals in recovery from mental illness or substance abuse since September 2012. It is staffed by peer specialists who have identified themselves as living with a mental illness.

A new and highly popular feature to the center has been 'Open Jam Sessions' every Saturday night. During this time, community members offer their musical talents to entertain guests. Spectators hang out, drink coffee and can engage in art projects.



Some local musical guests have included Steve and Liz Bjorklund and John Ludi. Liz has even led sing-a-longs at the jam sessions. Anywhere from three to ten musicians will participate each week.

John Cox, a peer specialist who works at the center, says, "I

have personally seen how music is a great tool in recovery and increases social interaction. Typically when the guitars come out, consumers at the center are eager to hear what is being played. I have also seen decreased social anxiety because of increased focus on the activity.



Because our jam sessions are smaller, have no stage and are more casual, this also reduces anxiety and social phobias."

Announcing FCC's new President and CEO

The Family & Children's Center Board of Directors has hired Tita Yutuc as president and chief executive officer. Tita began her role in July.

Tita is a La Crosse native, a University of Wisconsin-Madison graduate, has a masters' degree in social work and is a licensed clinical social worker. Most recently, she served as the chief operations officer for SOS Children's Villages Illinois and comes to FCC with more than 16 years of leadership experience. Tita's operational and clinical background, in combination with her passion for FCC's mission will be a great fit for our clients and staff.

"Tita is a true leader with demonstrated experience and proven outcomes in clinical therapy, residential care, foster care and community-based outreach programs—all of which are core areas for Family & Children's Center," says Laura Eddy, current FCC board chair. "She's not only managed multi-million-dollar budgets, but as a licensed clinical social worker, she's also worked directly with clients and understands firsthand the challenges they face."

Tita will follow Mike Boehm who resigned from Family & Children's Center late in 2014 after 18 years of dedicated service to the agency.



Vernon Memorial Healthcare Partners with FCC to Help Eliminate Domestic Violence in Vernon County

Services for domestic abuse victims have been provided for 34 years in Vernon County. Just over 20 years ago, Family & Children's Center in Viroqua merged with Douglass Mental Health Center who was currently offering a program to aid victims of domestic violence. Family & Children's Center has since been dedicated to keeping, what is now called the Domestic Abuse Project (DAP), alive.

DAP offers a trained, skilled advocate for individuals experiencing domestic violence. By developing individual safety plans, participants are able to

find safe shelter, ongoing support, legal action and assistance from other community resources. The program is able to help on average 100 families in Vernon County each year.

In 2014, 115 domestic violence referrals were made to the district attorney's office in Vernon County. Those domestic violence referrals made up almost 25 percent of all crimes reported to the DA's office last year.

DAP is funded by a grant from the state of Wisconsin which requires a 50 percent local match from

the community. For many years Vernon Memorial Healthcare (VMH) has partnered with FCC to help meet this match. FCC holds an event each fall during Domestic Violence Awareness month to raise the remainder of the funds.

"VMH is happy to partner with FCC to serve these victims," says Kyle Bakkum, CEO of VMH. "As a hospital we see the effects of domestic violence in the patients we serve. We are dedicated to helping the Domestic Abuse Project end the cycle of violence in Vernon County."

Community Support Program Expands in Jackson and Monroe Counties

Big changes began in FCC's Community Support Program (CSP) late last year. La Crosse, Jackson and Monroe counties decided to form a regional partnership called the Western Region Integrated Care Consortium (WRIC) which combines 32 services together under one umbrella and provider for those with severe mental illness. Because FCC was already the CSP provider in two of the three counties, it was a logical choice for the new regional contract. FCC will also continue to provide CSP services in Vernon County.

The contract is designed to offer a higher quality of care, utilizing several evidence-

based practices. Under the regional model, service supports once offered only to La Crosse county individuals are now available to individuals living in the two other smaller, rural counties. One of these service supports includes our award winning Individual Placement and Support supported employment program.

Other benefits of the regional model include providing better continuity of care for individuals and shared resources and expertise

which save the region money.

"The commitment the WRIC region has made to providing and funding a very high quality of care is not common in this era of decreased funds," says Kathy Rohr, coordinator of community support programs. "We consider it a privilege to provide these quality services to people in our region and better the lives of over 100 persons with significant mental illness each year."



September 20th



Tri-Quest
Run, Bike, Golf

November 20th



An Evening In
Monte Carlo

December 5th



Building Bricks
for Hope:
Lego® Contest

BECAUSE CHILD ABUSE HAS NO PLACE IN OUR COMMUNITY

It shouldn't happen here, but it does.

One in ten kids will be abused before the age of 18. Many of them will suffer lifetime consequences. All of them are forever changed.

These companies have had enough. They partnered with Family & Children's Center in 2014 and 2015 to become True Blue by sponsoring programs that give children better tomorrows.

The children thank them. We thank them. We hope you thank them, too.

True Blue Partners

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allergy Associates of La Crosse • Ballweg Midwest Toyota • Bettsworth Concrete & Construction • Brown & Brown Insurance • Coulee Bank • Coulee Parenting Connection • Dahl Automotive • Dairyland Power • The Growth Coach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gundersen Health System • Health Tradition Health Plan • Honda Motorwerks • The Insurance Center • Kaplan Professional Schools • La Crosse Graphics • La Crosse Mail & Print Solutions • Larson Architect • Logistics Health Inc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merchants Bank • Misty's Dance Unlimited • Modern Crane • Mooresmiles • Mueller Media • Park Bank • Pischke Motors • River Rocks • Schneider Heating & Air Conditioning • TCI | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Rivers Technologies • Three Sixty Real Estate Solutions • Travel Leaders • Trust Point Inc. • Valley View Mall • Waterfront Restaurant & Tavern • Wipfli LLP |
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Jasmine's Story

Hope Academy and Healthy Families Change Pregnant Teens' Lives

Seventeen-year-old Jasmine* had a lot of distractions. She lived with ten family members in a three-bedroom house, worked so she'd have money for shopping and spent free time with her 18-year-old boyfriend. School just wasn't a priority.

It didn't help that a new distraction—bigger than any other—was on the way. Just when Jasmine was about to break up with her boyfriend, she discovered she was pregnant.

Jasmine's parents learned of the pregnancy when her clinic sent paperwork to her home. "They were pushing me to get an abortion; they even offered to pay for it," Jasmine says. "I think I would have done it but when I went to my ultrasound, I saw a baby. The fact that she was already a little human being—I couldn't do it."

Her family stopped supporting her at that point, and Jasmine moved in with her boyfriend in a small, dingy apartment eight miles from her school.

As Jasmine's pregnant belly grew, so did the nausea and gossip among classmates. Every day, she worried how she would get home from school. All things considered, it was easier to skip school.

Fortunately, Jasmine didn't skip clinic appointments. A social worker there helped her connect with Hope Academy, a program at Family & Children's Center that provides teen parents the opportunity to complete a high

school education. Teen moms bring their babies to school with them where, in addition to academics, moms spend time each day engaging with and caring for their children with instructors there to model.

Jasmine enrolled at Hope Academy in late fall of her senior year of high school. By December, she was already catching up on credits.

Seeing the numerous stressors facing Jasmine, Hope Academy faculty helped her enroll in Healthy Families, Family & Children's Center's home visiting program. Jasmine now has a family systems specialist who helps her monitor her baby's development and access needed resources to achieve a healthy future for her baby and herself.

Jasmine graduated in May. She lives in a better place, has a job, and she's excited to study nursing this fall at Western Technical College. She's setting new goals with her family systems specialist and collaborating with a Birth to 3 program. She's also learning to drive.

"Family & Children's Center gave me a whole new future. "If I didn't have all this help, I wouldn't be able to provide for Ava the way every child deserves. Everything changed when I came here. Now life is really good."

**Name changed to protect privacy.*



The national graduation rate for teen moms is less than 50 percent. At Hope Academy, 100 percent of students graduate.

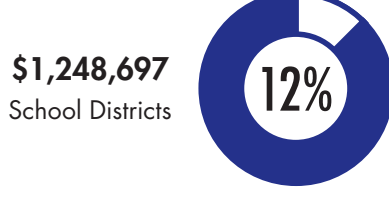
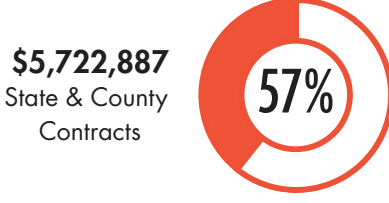
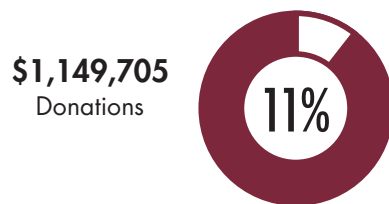
Healthy Families has been proven to be highly effective in preventing child abuse and neglect. It saves up to \$4 taxpayer dollars for every \$1 invested.

2014 Annual Report

Financial Highlights

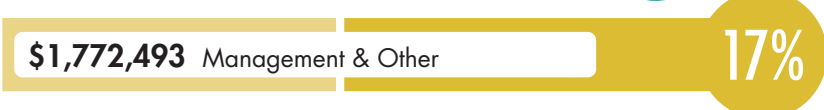
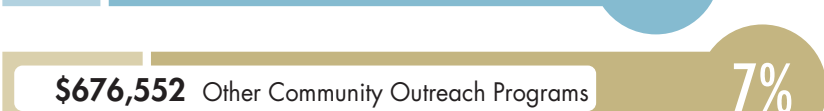
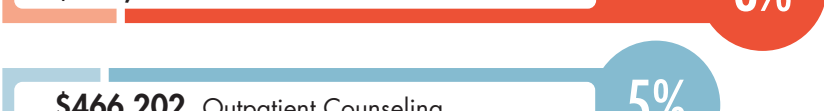
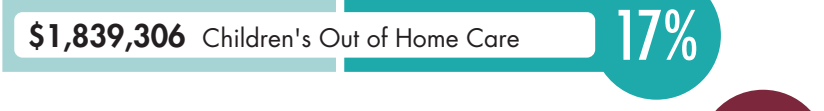
Sources of Support

Total: \$10,140,151



Expenses

Total: \$10,519,794

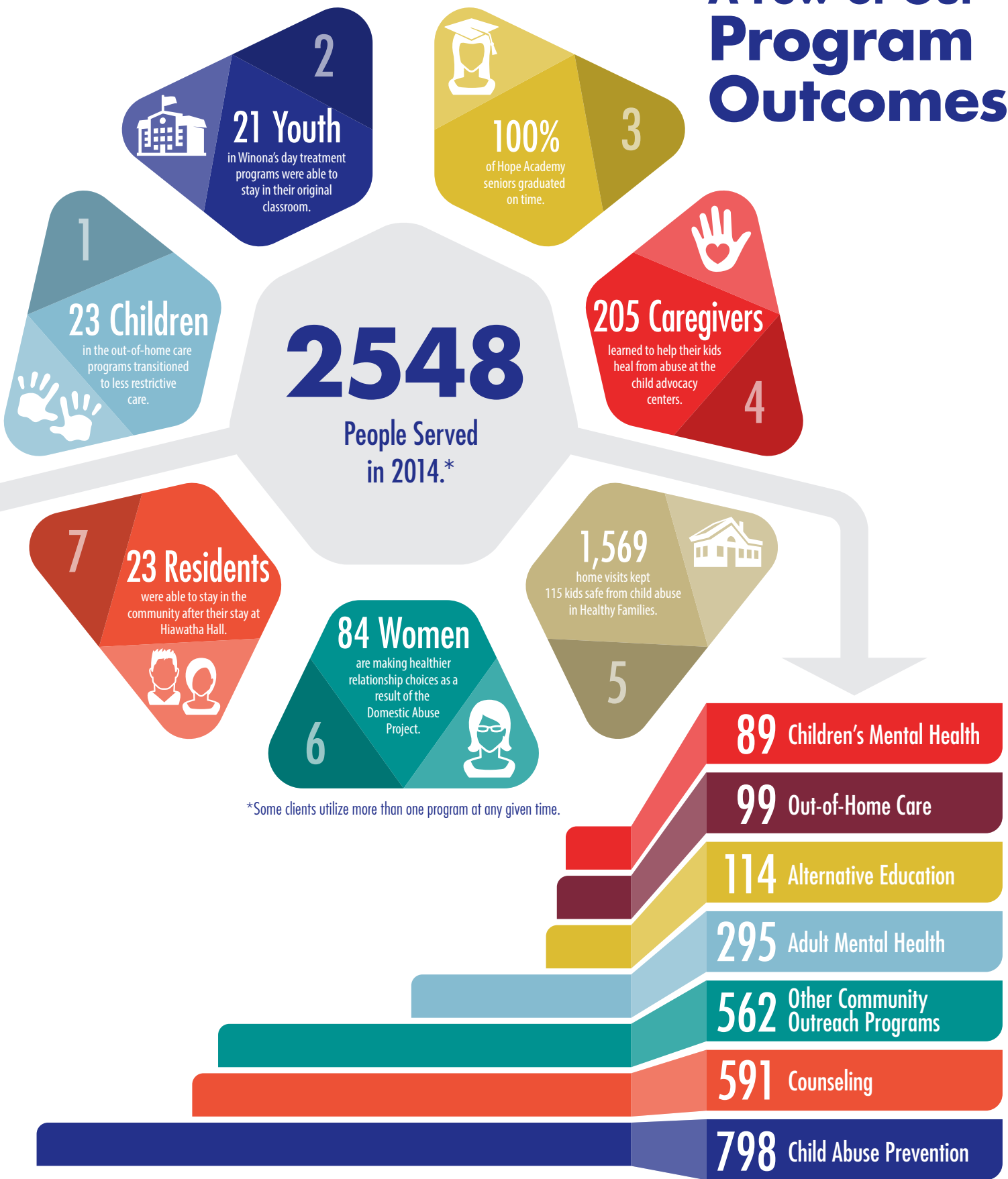


6
Locations

245
Staff

156
Volunteers

A Few of Our Program Outcomes





Jeanne Meyer

Coordinator of Children's Advocacy Center Services, La Crosse & Winona

Stepping Stones Children's Advocacy Center is a very well known program at Family & Children's Center. But many may not know what happens there and who it is exactly that makes miracles happen.

Stepping Stones is a safe and comfortable place where children are interviewed about alleged abuse and neglect. A multidisciplinary team minimizes their trauma and improves the investigation and prosecution of abuse cases

while ensuring the victims receive immediate support.

Jeanne Meyer is FCC's coordinator of children's advocacy services. Jeanne spends about a quarter of her time actually performing forensic interviews, a main service provided at Stepping Stones. A forensic interview is a single-session, recorded interview designed to prompt a child's unique information when there are concerns of abuse.

Meyer has always worked in victim services. She has been with Stepping Stones for the last 10 years, even before it merged with FCC. Meyer says, "I do it for the kids. My favorite thing about my job is knowing I allowed a child to express themselves. Hopefully they can then overcome what has happened to them. It's important they know someone cares.

"It's amazing when you physically see a child change so they can move in the right direction," says

Meyer. "You then know you made a difference."

Meyer began working with at-risk kids because she wanted to help kids who were struggling by realizing they don't have to be defined by their circumstances.

The other 75 percent of the time Meyer supports other colleagues during forensic interviews, acts as the family advocate, and facilitates trainings throughout the community.

Meyer has three children of her own. "I want them to have every opportunity to be successful. I want them to feel empowered, compassionate and be responsible." One thing Meyer hopes to do more in the future is to help strengthen the self-esteem and help empower women and girls in our community. Meyer also enjoys being active, shopping and playing games.



Philomena Willems

Mental Health Technician, Viroqua

Philomena Willems, 'Philo' for short, has been working at FCC in Viroqua since it merged with the Douglass Mental Health Center 21 years ago. She began as the receptionist during the merger before transitioning to a

mental health technician in the Community Support Program.

A mental health technician provides medication deliveries and supportive services to adults with severe and persistent mental illnesses in their homes. Willems works with many clients as a CSP tech and her case load is larger than a case manager's. She is able to move from one client to another all day without a break!

While that could cause some in this field to ignore details from clients, that is not the case with Willems. Last year, she was even able to help diagnose a client's medical challenges that were puzzling to most. She assessed the symptoms of the client and continued

conversations with other staff about this client's presentation. Because of her efforts, the client was able to receive medical attention for the issue which may have led to an early death if not addressed. Figuring out this client's medical issues is not something in Willems' job description. She goes above and beyond to care for her clients.

Many staff members really enjoy working with Willems. "One thing that amazes me about Philo is her tenacity. She never gives up!" says Kathy Rohr, coordinator of community support programs.

Philo is Dutch and still speaks the language. She enjoys spending time with her grandchildren.

Our Board of Directors

The community volunteers who serve on Family & Children's Center's Board of Directors are our most committed ambassadors and advocates. They share their time, talent and treasure to ensure the center's success in every area: strategy, programs, personnel and finances.

Board Spotlight – Jeff Weiser



Residing in La Crescent, Minnesota, Jeff Wieser is the co-owner of Wieser Brothers General Contractor, Inc., alongside his brother Brian. In addition to serving on the FCC board, Jeff is on the Western Wisconsin Technical College Foundation Board, Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Crucifixion Church Building Committee and is active in the Great Rivers United Way.

Wieser, one of 18 siblings, was instilled with good morals and taught the difference between right and wrong. The Wiesers all knew the most important part of life was family. Being fortunate enough to have had a great upbringing, Wieser joined the FCC board to share his experiences and help those who are not as fortunate.

Why do you believe in the mission of FCC?

I believe in the mission of FCC because it is very important that families from uncontrollable circumstances are given every opportunity to gain life skills needed to succeed and in turn continue to pass along to their children. The Family & Children's Center offers a variety of services to help those in need.

How do you see the impact of FCC's programs in our community?

When I hear the success stories of children who once had little hope for the future benefit from resources which provide a safe environment to learn and develop skills and contribute back to their communities, it makes me proud to have the opportunity to serve on the board.

Why should people consider a gift to FCC?

A gift to FCC is investing in our future. The local outreach programs offered are such a wonderful resource for small children, adolescent, and adults as well. Your donation is put to use right here in our own communities.

What have you learned from serving on FCC's Board of Directors?

If we have healthy families, our community is going to be a place where new healthy families will move. We'll have less crime, more compassion and a better place to live. It all starts at home.

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Thank You!

To all those who contributed to Family & Children’s Center in 2014 – whether it be with time, talent or treasure – *thank you*. You help provide a better path to tomorrow for thousands of struggling children, families and individuals in our communities.

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Kim Hubert
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Please call the Development Office at (608) 785-0001 ext. 235 if you have a question or correction. We apologize in advance for any inaccuracies.

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~ Jasmine, Client, Hope Academy and Healthy Families

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