

ELEVATING CARE

FOR A BRIGHTER

TOMORROW



FAMILY & CHILDREN
SERVICES A SOURCE OF HOPE

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Friends

A Letter from our Chief Executive Officer

The year 2023 will forever be memorable in my career as I transitioned to the CEO role 28 years after coming to work at Family & Children Services. It is such an honor to be able to lead this wonderful, 120-year-old organization that I have worked for, while living in this community and raising my family.

I am excited to combine the knowledge from our Agency's history with a strategic vision for the future. I have the unique opportunity to utilize the knowledge I gained from the families and children whom I served through my counseling role, in the decisions and direction I am now responsible for as the CEO.

Many of the services we provide at Family & Children Services are a part of the array of services offered by our public health and human services system to meet the needs of keeping children safe, guiding parents to do their best for their children, and helping those with emotional and mental health conditions to fully engage in their lives. One of our Agency's values is that of service, which means that we are results-oriented and do the right thing in extending ourselves to our clients. We measure our success in obtaining this value by remaining an accredited organization under the Council on Accreditation (COA).

The field of health and human services continues to evolve as we learn more deeply about the challenges under-resourced people in our community face and the conditions and events that have impacted their lives. Our partner, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), is focused on keeping

kids safe and is approaching this work by focusing on actions such as prevention, stabilization, and workforce development.

Family & Children Services' prevention work includes recognizing families have many strengths, nurturing those strengths, and helping them work on areas of opportunity for growth. Identifying, incorporating, and strengthening Protective Factors into our programming is one way we do that.

We are committed to family stability as demonstrated by our innovative development of a Fostering Kinship service, which is funded by donor support and follows research showing that children in kinship placements have more placement stability. Our program supports those relatives who provide that stability.

The foundation of our Agency's ability to deliver our continuum of services is the strength of our workforce. We are implementing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles and creating an inclusive workplace, welcoming diversity among ourselves, and demonstrating an understanding of those we serve to best meet their needs.

I am looking forward to 2024 as we begin a new strategic plan cycle and continue to be a source of hope by engaging in and contributing to community initiatives addressing essential issues and needs. ■

Diane L. Marquess



**Pictured: Diane Marquess, CEO, with
President of the Board, Brian K. Hudson**



Council on Accreditation

At Family & Children Services, we take our jobs as leaders of the industry seriously. We don't just comply with industry best practices; we attempt to predict future standards and implement them before they are mandated at federal or state levels.

In January 2024, we participated in a Council on Accreditation (COA) reaccreditation. This review occurs every four years to keep us up to date with the latest quality standards. COA is a nationally recognized, independent accreditor of community-based behavioral health care and social service organizations.

During a review, quality, risk management, continuous improvement, transparency and accountability, and recognition are evaluated and measured to determine whether an agency implements best practices. A national team from COA conducted interviews with board members, supervisors, staff, community partners, and service recipients. They visited our facilities, reviewed our programs, and examined thousands of internal documents.

We are honored by how the reviewers spoke of the way we dedicate ourselves to the mission of our organization and our efforts to maintain the highest possible standards of industry.

Allison Bland, Quality Services & Compliance Manager, Privacy Officer at Family & Children Services, led the process internally and externally.

“Being accredited through COA is exceptionally difficult because they are constantly updating their standards, so best practices are being reviewed every year. That means we can't wait four years to evaluate our programs and whether they measure up to new standards; we must measure them consistently to ensure we are staying ahead of those trends and doing our very best for the clients in our programs.”

The feedback from the COA reviewers included complimentary remarks on our evidence-based programs, Lean Management practices, highly skilled and passionate staff, the respect and care with which we treat our clients, our commitment to implementing DEI practices and principles, and our ability to meet critical needs through our **HANDLE WITH CARE Annual Fund**.

As one of the reviewers said,

“Reaccreditation is a tremendous achievement that demonstrates that your organization is recognized as a provider that continues to successfully implement high performance standards and, as such, is delivering the highest quality services to all its stakeholders. Congratulations!”

Our mission is to support, strengthen, and preserve the safety, well-being, and dignity of children, individuals, and families. We are committed to implementing that mission in the most respectful and impactful ways for those we serve and are grateful that respected, national accrediting institutions like COA see the work we are doing and acknowledge we are living out our mission and our values in everything we do. ■





Protective Factors

Family & Children Services is committed to keeping families together whenever possible. Our clients come to us with many strengths and our job is to nurture those strengths while helping them work on areas of opportunity.

Identifying Protective Factors is one way we do that. Protective Factors are the factors that mitigate or eliminate risk and promote resilience in families. The more Protective Factors a family has, the lower the risk of child abuse and neglect.

For the last two years, Callista Cook, Business Operations Coordinator, has been a trainer and curriculum developer through the Michigan Federation for Children and Families in Protective Factors.

Callista recently worked with a family we will call the Morgans. Prior to Callista working with them, they struggled financially, the children were experiencing behavioral issues in school, and there were significant ongoing health issues for the mom.

The dad was overwhelmed because he was taking on his normal familial responsibilities and adding what mom had typically done. As a result, he was having a hard time keeping employment while helping mom with her health and the children with their education. The Morgans were referred to one of our family preservation programs which helps parents successfully navigate challenging times.

Initially, the family was hesitant to receive these services because they felt vulnerable and overwhelmed.

One of the first tasks in these services is a Protective Factors survey, which allows family members to honestly

reflect on their situation. The survey identifies the strengths the family already has, as well as areas of opportunity in which they need additional support.

After Callista examined the results of their Protective Factors survey, she knew connecting the Morgan family with counseling services was the priority.

Protective Factors:

- **Parental resilience** – The ability of parents to bounce back from challenges and maintain a positive outlook is important because it helps parents cope with stress and adversity, enabling them to provide a stable environment for their children.
- **Social connections** – Providing emotional support, practical assistance, and a sense of belonging.
- **Knowledge of parenting and child development** – This awareness helps parents make informed decisions and respond appropriately to their children's needs.
- **Concrete support in times of need** – Ensuring families can meet their basic needs and access necessary services during times of crisis.
- **Social and emotional competence of children** – Children's ability to regulate emotions, form positive relationships, and engage effectively with others is important because it predicts long-term success and well-being, including academic achievement and mental health.

Counseling helped them to learn how to manage their stress better, parent in a way that worked with the children, communicate better with each other, as well as techniques to use in dealing with the health challenges they were facing.

Callista also helped them reconnect to the social circle they already had and learn how to keep those connections strong. The family then felt more supported, less isolated, and better equipped to deal with some of their challenges.

The Morgan family owns their home but, due to all the aforementioned factors, it had fallen into disrepair. Callista utilized Agency and community resources to get the Morgans into home repair programs, utility support programs, and bill support programs, which gave them a more stable home environment.

In addition to outside Agency resources, Callista was able to access **HANDLE WITH CARE** dollars.

The Morgan children were dealing with common stressors of teenagers on top of the stress and uncertainty of their mom's health. That anxiety and fear often manifested in negative school behavior and performance because they didn't have healthy ways of communicating their feelings.

The kids began individual counseling and started to learn better ways of communicating their emotions to their parents and to school staff and administration.

Their grades were suffering because they were spending so much time in the hospital with their mom while their dad was at work. In addition, they were sharing one phone between them to do their homework, which was not a long-term viable option.

Callista again turned to **HANDLE WITH CARE** dollars to get them each a laptop. Their grades started to improve, their stressors went down, and they were able to spend more quality time with their mom as a result.

There are a multitude of benefits of focusing on the Protective Factors framework with families including improved family functioning, enhanced child development outcomes, reduced likelihood of child abuse and neglect, and increased resilience in children and families.

Since incorporating Protective Factors into our programs, our data shows markedly improved outcomes for client families. Our Agency data, as well as outside research, shows that interventions focused on Protective Factors are more effective in promoting family resilience.

Creating strong families contributes to a healthier, more resilient community. By investing in Protective Factors, we help create a supportive environment for families to thrive. ■

Handle With Care

The **HANDLE WITH CARE Annual Fund** is an essential safety net for those who turn to Family & Children Services for help in a crisis.

As the Morgan family proves, even a small donation to **HANDLE WITH CARE** can stave off disaster for an individual or family and has the potential to change the course of their lives.

Ensuring two teenagers had computers meant better mental health for the whole family, better grades, and better behavior for the children in school.

If you would like to join the thousands of generous donors who help keep families together, visit fcsource.org.



Secure, online donations are welcomed at fcsource.org.



Case Management

Family & Children Services' Case Management team provides services to children and adults with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities or Serious Emotional Disturbances, including youth on the Autism Spectrum.

Case Management (CM) helps individuals and families successfully participate in a community environment by providing services that are responsive, respectful, and flexible. Our CM services empower individuals and families with strength-based strategies to enable them to achieve their goals, direct their own lives, and reduce dependency on service providers.

Shae Goretzka, Supervisor of Case Management, stresses a teamwork approach as often as she can and exemplifies it herself by taking on her own caseload.

"I believe in getting creative and having fun with how our team gets to know our clients and families. We go through exercises where we imagine the client throughout their day and what needs they have everywhere they go. We go to school and watch as our clients interact socially so we're able to see

what interventions might be needed to help them participate more fully in different settings. It makes our work that much more effective for the families we care for," Shae said.

CM also utilizes **HANDLE WITH CARE**, our annual fund that is an essential safety net for those who turn to Family & Children Services for help in a crisis, as these funds are not just for immediate critical needs but also to assist in observing our clients in different settings.

For example, last summer Shae used **HANDLE WITH CARE** funds to purchase park passes for the CM team to keep in their cars to take clients and families to the beach and to parks to observe them interacting with the greater public.

A Case Manager took their client, who has Autism, to the beach. One thing they were working on with this client was the ability to interact positively in public settings. After a full day at the beach, they stopped for ice cream and the Case Manager witnessed the client hold the door open for a stranger.

Though this act may seem small to many of us, it was a huge win for the client. The Case Manager was so proud, as was the client. This win, Shae said, wouldn't have been possible to notice had they just been sitting at home. Recognizing wins is a big piece of the puzzle for these clients and families!

Our CM team recognizes that the families we serve have the same desires, hopes, and fears for their families that we all do. They need access to resources and information and a team of people in their corner celebrating their wins and encouraging them through their challenges. ■



Shae Goretzka,
Supervisor of Case Management



Fostering Kinship

According to research, children in kinship placements spend less time in foster care, have more placement stability, and have lower incidences of abuse. In our mission to be industry leaders in all our programs, we sought grants to enact a program enabling a Specialist to work with kinship placements.

Our Fostering Kinship Program is a voluntary program provided for up to 6 months, with an option to extend longer depending on the family's needs. The Specialist provides an assessment of needs using the Protective Factors Survey to establish a strength-based, individualized plan for kinship caregivers.

"The initial home visit is about getting to know the caregivers," said Kinship Specialist Tashombi Vines. "I try to learn about their support structure and day-to-day lives. I feel like this really proves I'm not out to tell them what to do but rather to learn where I can help them and the children the most."

"I'm building trust and creating brave spaces where we can have hard but important conversations. I think by presenting myself as an ally, I'm less threatening so we can get down to the business of supporting the whole family," she added.

The ultimate goal is to strengthen families by building coping skills, increasing education on child development, honing parenting skills, understanding trauma, and ensuring they have the tools they need by the end of the program.

"The children already know their kinship caregivers. That means children are often more open to building on that existing connection as opposed to trusting that a stranger in the traditional foster care model will have their best interests at heart. Our kinship placements keep the connections the children already know, which goes a long way in helping children who have lost so much when they were placed in foster care," she said.

"I'm grateful our Agency continues to put the children first in all our program models and that we invest in supporting the entire family and foster care caregivers, knowing that keeps children feeling safe and families feeling strong."

Though Fostering Kinship Programs are not required by or financially funded by the State, Family & Children Services continues to do what research says is best for children and families. Without grant opportunities from community partners, programs like this would not be possible. ■



**Tashombi Vines,
Kinship Specialist**

2023 Financial Highlights

Family & Children Services' operating revenues for 2023 were \$7,768,279. Our Agency friends generously donated \$1,042,660 in contributions and grants. Agency Endowment Funds supported programs with \$720,682. We received non-cash gifts with an estimated value of \$155,000. Operating expenses, excluding depreciation, were \$9,923,309.

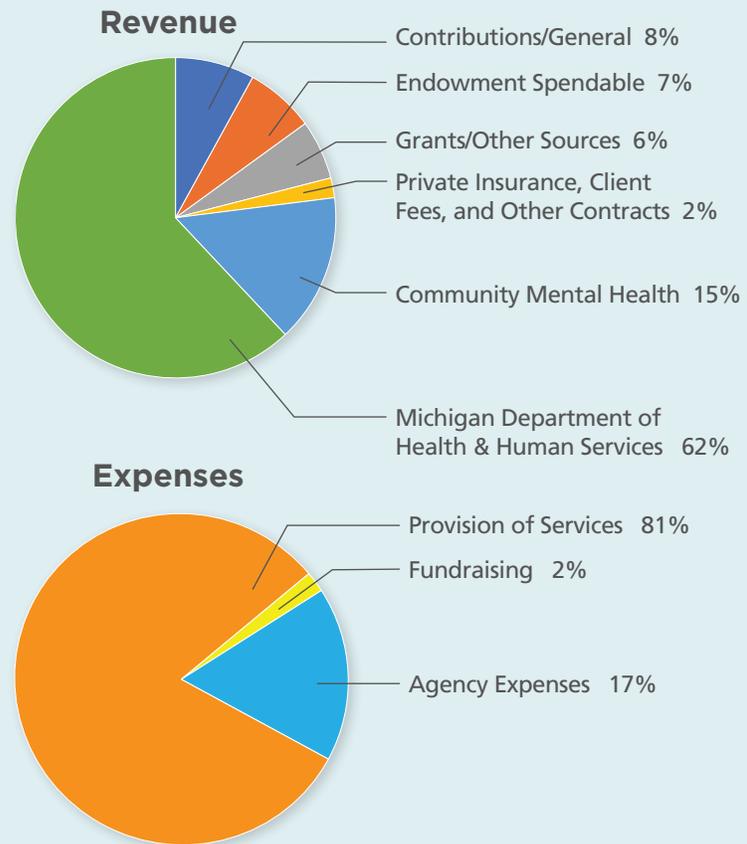
The Agency continues to be financially stable and maintains strong relationships with our donors and community partners. Forgiveness of a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loan through the CARES Act provided fiscal stability through the past two years.

Our emphasis in 2024 is on retaining our highly trained staff and hiring to fill essential social service and clinical positions in a challenging labor market. Having a vision and strategic plan remains vital, both fiscally and in providing needed services to our clients and communities.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Family & Children Services recognizes that a workforce that more accurately reflects and understands the individuals and communities it serves, creates more positive outcomes for all involved. We also recognize that each individual, child, and family who turns to us as a source of hope has experienced a unique set of challenges and barriers in their lives. The commitment of Family & Children Services is to do all we can to ensure that we have the highest trained and culturally competent staff to meet the diverse needs and challenges our clients face, both today and in the future.

"Family & Children Services is unique in its commitment and understanding of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) practices and principles. From the board room to the water cooler, we are all listening to and learning from one another. We are working to more broadly understand the intersectional nature of privilege and marginalization in our peers and the clients we serve. Family & Children Services continues to recommit itself



day in and day out because we know it's not only the right thing to do but also the best way to serve our community and promote real and lasting hope," said Tony Shepherd, DEI Manager at Family & Children Services.

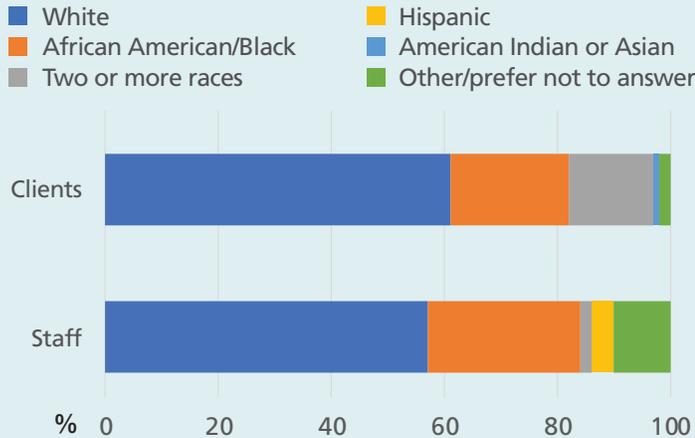
As our workforce and services evolve to reflect the growing diversity of our communities and world, our efforts to understand, value, and incorporate differences becomes increasingly important. We are proud of the work we have done to hire a workforce that more accurately reflects our community and look forward to continuing our progress into 2024.



2023 Agency Demographics

4,562 Individuals Impacted
2,555 Children/Youth Impacted

- More than 80% of those served live 200% below federal poverty guidelines
- 60% under the age of 24



Customer Satisfaction Ratings

- 94% felt treated with respect
- 94% felt satisfied with all services
- 96% felt staff were sensitive to culture/ethnicity

Family & Children Services supported 4,562 individuals in 2023; of them, 2,555 were children/youth. More than 80% of those we serve live 200% below federal poverty guidelines, 17% identify as LGBTQIA+, more than 50% live with a physical and/or emotional impairment or disability, and 18% are homeless/unhoused.

Those we serve self-identify as 61% White, 21% African American/Black, 10% two or more races, 1% American Indian or Asian, 2% other/prefer not to answer, and 5% indicate Hispanic/Latinx.

Program Outcomes

Behavioral Health

Family and Community Treatment, Case Management, Outpatient Counseling

- The Counseling Center – 415 individuals impacted
- Community Based Mental Health – 330 individuals impacted
- 83% of youth/families improved or maintained their functioning at home, school, and in the community

Crisis Intervention

Mobile Crisis Response (MCR), Therapeutic Residential Youth Services

- Mobile Crisis Response – 329 individuals impacted
- 74% of crisis resolved without out-of-home placement needed
- Therapeutic Residential Youth Services – 15 youth served; screened or assessed for trauma impact and treated in trauma-informed programming

Child Welfare

Family Preservation and Parenting Support

- 1,133 individuals impacted
- 100% of high-risk families remained together after services
- 100% of caregivers demonstrated increased parenting skills after services

Foster Care and Adoption

- 2,340 individuals impacted
- 100% of children achieved permanence within 24 months
- 100% of homes received monthly support to maintain child placement and support foster parents



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Ways to Give

Your support is critical to ensure that every child has a safe and stable place to call home.

HANDLE WITH CARE Annual Fund is a unique safety net providing Agency clients with basic needs and critical services where there is no other source in the community.

Our **Summer Enrichment** program provides opportunities for children served by the Agency to participate in activities over the summer such as day and overnight camp, academic tutoring, art and music classes, sports, and more.

Holiday Giving matches client families and children with individuals, schools, community groups, and corporate donors to provide holiday gifts and gift cards over the holiday season.

Our **Year 'Round Pantry** collects in-kind gifts from the community to support client needs such as blankets, bedding, coats, household items, personal care products, diapers, back-to-school items, toys, and books.

Visionary Club donors provide planned gifts to support future generations of children and families.

To make a gift, please contact Courtenay VanderMolen, Director of Resource Development, at 269.488.7936.

Online donations can be made securely at fcsource.org or by scanning the QR code below.



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Meet Heather Videto, Resource Development Coordinator

Heather Videto has been with Family & Children Services for almost a decade; in 2023, she became our Resource Development Coordinator.

Her responsibilities include processing donations, filling **HANDLE WITH CARE** requests from staff on behalf of clients, recruiting and working with volunteers, and organizing our pantry and pantry donations. She also utilizes her creativity in helping the Agency plan staff, client, and community events.

For Heather, hearing the stories of what our clients face every day and how their burdens are lifted by **HANDLE WITH CARE** dollars makes her job rewarding.

“Knowing that someone’s \$20 or \$1,000 donation makes such a huge difference in the lives of our clients really impacts me,” she said.

“I just feel lucky that I get to be the conduit of that donor impact by saying yes to our staff who apply for help for their clients. It’s a deeply moving part of my job,” Heather added.

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This Annual Report recognizes those who gave between January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023. While every attempt was made to report names accurately, please accept our apology if we have made an error. If you would like a change in the way your name is reflected in future reports, please contact the Development Office at 269.488.7936. Our most sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to Family & Children Services throughout 2023.

- * Funds are held at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation
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2023 has been difficult as we have lost many longtime friends of our Agency. Their acts of volunteering, service, and generosity had a profound effect on our team and many others.

When donors choose Planned Giving, their impact lasts well beyond their lifetimes. The values they held in life continue in perpetuity, leaving a legacy for generations.

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