



# moving toward *hope*

PATHS TO KEEP CHILDREN **SAFE**, MAKE FAMILIES **STRONG** AND BUILD **SUPPORTIVE** COMMUNITIES







hope



hope means  
children  
growing up  
believing  
they can  
realize their  
dreams





## Casey Family Programs steps forward to inspire, inform, influence and demonstrate

Shelia Evans-Tranum  
CHAIR, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

When your mission is to improve the lives of all of America's children, you cannot sit quietly or be content with past progress. To the contrary, you have to step outside your comfort zone and challenge prevailing thought.

To be a catalyst for momentous change, you have to inspire, inform, influence and demonstrate.

That is what we have set out to do at Casey Family Programs. When Jim Casey, the founder of United Parcel Service, established our foundation in 1966, he created the means to link strong families with vulnerable children – those abused, neglected or otherwise deprived of familial support – by providing top-quality foster care services.

Foster care is a consequence of family breakdown. If America is to achieve its goal of safe children, strong families and supportive communities, we must address the root causes of what debilitates and devastates families. We therefore must look beyond the narrow lens of foster care and consider all factors that contribute to a lack of hope among children, including the complex societal issues that preclude a community from thriving.

From day one, Jim Casey instilled within Casey Family Programs the belief that hope is possible. When we launched our 2020 Strategy for America's Children in 2006, some questioned our goal to safely reduce by 50 percent the number of children in foster care in the U.S. by the year 2020. We heard we were being too bold in our efforts to improve the lives of children and families. And yet the number of children under age 18 living in foster care has decreased by more than 100,000 from 2006 to 2011, a reduction of 21.5 percent.

Hope indeed is possible. Praise goes to the parents, the children themselves and the community support networks that lift up those families – everyone from the close relative to the next-door neighbor, from the schoolteacher to the beat cop, from the pastor to the landlord, from the judge to the caseworker.

Our challenge now is to sustain this progress and build upon these community support networks.

We at Casey Family Programs will do our part. We will continue to inspire child welfare systems across the country to improve services to children and families by offering our assistance, experience and expertise. Recognizing that child welfare systems cannot be expected to assume this responsibility alone, we also will continue to work in partnership with juvenile justice programs, family courts, schools, housing agencies, public health systems and any other sector within a community that has the ability and the desire to improve the well-being of children.

We take our role as a catalyst for change very seriously. As such, we will seek to inform the national discussion on child welfare and influence federal, state and local policy to enhance America's vision of safe children, strong families and supportive communities.

Hope is possible – and, today, it is well within our grasp.

*Shelia Evans-Iranmanesh*

MORE THAN  
**21**  
PERCENT

That's the  
decrease  
nationally in  
the number  
of children  
under 18 in  
foster care  
from 2006  
to 2011.

FY 2006 | 486,967  
FY 2011 | 382,393

**Note:** Federal fiscal year is from October to September.

**Sources:** National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect, Cornell University; Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).



## Supportive communities put children on **the paths to hope**

William C. Bell, Ph.D.  
**PRESIDENT AND CEO**

Family

Growing up where I did, I can't help but recall that historic day in April 1967 when U.S. Sen. Robert F. Kennedy visited rural Mississippi to investigate reports of extreme poverty among the families of out-of-work black sharecroppers.

On his trip, the senator was confronted by the human reality of abject poverty. He met some of the many children who were growing up without hope in the land of opportunity.

At the time of Sen. Kennedy's visit, I was an 8-year-old boy living in the tiny town of Pace, just eight miles away from where he stood. Whenever I look at the iconic photographs of the senator visiting with children of the Mississippi Delta, I am struck by how many other children in Mississippi at that time reflected their images – including me.

Nearly a half century after Sen. Kennedy's visit to the Delta, I look around America and see the vulnerable among us still living without the promise that hope brings. Too many children in America remain blind to their own potential because we have failed to help open their eyes. Families that have been conditioned for generations to not speak up for themselves remain silent. Every one of us has the responsibility to lift up the voices of vulnerable children and families and proclaim, as Sen. Kennedy stated: "We can do better than what we have done."



The paths to hope are lined with bold leaders and supportive communities that commit to strengthen families so that they may raise their children safely and successfully. The various stakeholders within a community must work in unison, not in isolation, rallying behind a shared vision and common goal to improve the lives and opportunities of all children and all families.

This is the heart of Building Communities of Hope across America.

At Casey Family Programs, we work with partners to support the transformational efforts of local leaders to safely reduce the need for foster care and improve opportunities for America's children. In our definition of the term, "child welfare" extends beyond the government-driven systems that come to the aid of children who have been victimized by abuse or neglect.

We cannot continue to wait until children are hurt before we intervene. Child welfare should not just be about rescuing children from trauma. It should be about ensuring child well-being by preventing trauma, healing hurt, and creating opportunities for all children and their families to live up to their highest potential.

We must change the "child welfare system" into a "child well-being system" that builds hope.

America's goal should be to keep children safe from harm wherever they find themselves – in their families, in their schools and in their neighborhoods. The way to create that safe environment is to build communities where every child can envision and achieve success.

We have the resources, knowledge, talent and technology to build communities of hope. We just need the commitment of people like you to make it happen. If we follow paths that keep children safe, make families strong and build supportive communities, we can ensure that every child in America achieves their full potential.

Sen. Kennedy's trip to the Mississippi Delta more than 45 years ago was a step on that journey. It is up to all of us to complete it.

*William C Bell*

*William C. Bell was a 2012 recipient of the Embracing the Legacy Award, presented by the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps. The award honors individuals and organizations working in Sen. Kennedy's spirit of hope to eliminate societal injustices and inequities that affect children and families.*



“We must change the ‘child welfare system’ into a ‘child well-being system’ that builds hope.”

# Moving Toward Hope

## every child counts

We talk about a “foster care system,” but in fact the vast majority of children who come to the attention of the child welfare system are not placed in foster care. Nationally, the goal is to help all vulnerable children grow up in safe, stable and loving families.

Each year **in America**



**Sources:** Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), provided in part by the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect data (NDACAN). Updated as of March 2013.



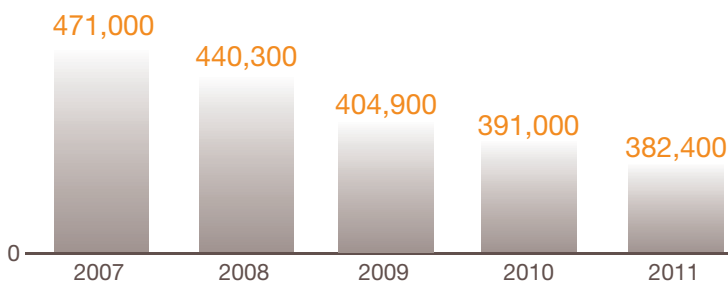
## keeping children safe

Safety and effective response go hand in hand. Most children enter foster care due to neglect and other reasons, not because of physical or sexual abuse. Providing targeted and effective interventions as soon as possible can safely prevent the need for foster care and better ensure that children who suffer any kind of maltreatment are not harmed again.

### Reasons children enter foster care



### Children under 18 living in foster care (As of September 30 of the corresponding year)



94% of children do not experience a repeat incident of maltreatment within six months

\*Other includes: Parental substance abuse, child substance abuse, child disability, child behavior problems, parent death, parent incarceration, caretaker inability to cope, relinquishment, inadequate housing

Sources: Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), provided in part by the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect data (NDACAN). Updated as of March 2013.

# 6 TO 1

For every \$6 spent to maintain children in foster care, **only \$1 is available to be invested in a wider array of services that prevent the need for foster care.**

The federal government spends about \$4.4 billion a year under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act to maintain children in foster care. By comparison, about \$700 million a year under Title IV-B is available to be invested in a wider array of practices and interventions that keep more children safe and make more families strong.

A tremendous opportunity exists to transform our nation's child welfare system to better prevent, or effectively address, child abuse and neglect and ensure more children are raised in safe, stable and nurturing families.

All children deserve to grow up in a community of hope that will help them achieve their full potential. But a disconnect exists between what America wants for children and families and how the federal government invests in them.

The largest pool of federal child welfare dollars, Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, supports only children who have been placed in foster care, often only after they have experienced maltreatment. The amount of dollars dedicated to preventing the abuse or neglect that leads to foster care in the first place is small by comparison. As a result, states and tribes often face hurdles in making the kinds of smart

investments in the practices and interventions that have been proven to keep more children safe and make more families strong.

Casey Family Programs believes all states and tribes should be able to spend federal child welfare dollars on services that are shown to:

- Help prevent child abuse and neglect.
- Give parents the skills and tools they need to raise their children successfully.
- Promote the safe reunification of children in foster care with their families.
- Support other permanency options, such as when grandparents or other relatives are caring for children.

The time is now to support dramatic improvements in child welfare by providing more effective services to more families and more children who need our help.

Many more children receive prevention services in their homes than are in foster care. Yet we invest much more money to maintain children in foster care than we do to keep them safely at home with their families.

Title IV-E



**\$4.4 billion**

Amount of Title IV-E money spent to maintain children in foster care



170,100 children receive federal foster care dollars

Title IV-B



3,004,500 children are involved in reports of maltreatment or other issues where timely interventions are important

**\$703 million**

Amount of Title IV-B money available to be invested in keeping children safely out of foster care

**Sources:** Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), provided in part by the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect data (NDACAN). Updated as of March 2013.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.





# innovation



## A Regular Kid

Smart investments in Colorado  
offer hope to a teenager  
with big dreams

Austin Strauser is scarfing down his second sandwich. Sporting a stripe-pattern hoodie that has earphones for drawstrings, he looks like a typical 13-year-old boy about to experience a major growth spurt. But when he speaks, he sounds so much older – almost too seasoned for his age.

“All I’ve ever wanted throughout my whole life is to be a regular kid, not someone that people are afraid of,” says the Fort Collins, Colo., seventh grader.

A bright kid, Austin nevertheless had been segregated from other students at school, whether in special-education classes or holed up at a day-treatment center, because of an inability to control his anger. If another student called Austin “stupid” or otherwise set him off, Austin would act before thinking and lash out at that student – only making matters worse.

The Larimer County Division of Children, Youth and Families received Austin’s case as a referral from juvenile court. A magistrate wanted to place the boy in a residential-treatment center, separating him from his mother and baby brother. But his mother, Jody Trujillo, believed Austin would fare much better at home – and the child welfare system agreed wholeheartedly, persuading the court to keep the family safely together while delivering a variety of in-home services, some quite unorthodox.

Rather than spending precious federal child welfare dollars to maintain Austin in a costly group-home setting, Larimer County took a close look at Austin’s needs and invested wisely in addressing them. The county provided family therapy, enrolled Austin in martial-arts classes to teach him the socialization skills and self-discipline he sorely lacked, and even purchased a special light for his bedroom to treat his seasonal affective disorder.

The impact on Austin has been substantial. “I had a very short temper but now my fuse runs all the way to New York,” he says. “They’ve taught me how to control my anger and what I think about, and also

“All I’ve ever wanted throughout my whole life is to be a regular kid, not someone that people are afraid of.”

– Austin Strauser, 13



to control peer pressure. That’s helped a lot.”

Not all children in foster care are there for reasons of abuse or neglect. In Colorado, nearly three of every four older youth (ages 13 to 17) who entered foster care in 2012 have “child behavior problems” listed as all or part of the reason for being removed from their home.

In addition, more than half of the older youth in foster care in Colorado are living in congregate care, also known as group homes. Child welfare systems have begun to realize that group homes are not necessarily ideal settings for these teenagers. As a result, systems are finding ways to address their behavioral issues at home while they live with their families.

Larimer County’s child welfare system acted creatively and decisively in serving the best interests of Austin and his family. It’s familiar territory for Larimer County, which makes it a top priority to prevent the need for foster care and safely reduce the use of congregate care, following a path toward making families strong and keeping children safe.

Colorado runs a state-supervised, county-administered child welfare system. The state passed a law in 2011 that offers financial incentives to counties that emphasize prevention and permanency over family separation and foster care.

A similar philosophy drives Colorado’s participation in the federal Child Welfare Demonstration Project, which gives a select number of states the flexibility to invest federal Title IV-E dollars in prevention and permanency services. The bulk of those dollars usually can be spent only on maintaining children in foster care.

As a result of flexible funding, Colorado can emphasize keeping families safely together while giving children like Austin hope to fulfill their dreams.

In Larimer County, the vast majority of children referred to the child welfare system by juvenile court or law





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supportive

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enforcement are receiving in-home services instead of being placed in group homes or foster homes, separated from their families. In fact, the ratio receiving in-home services versus out-of-home placement is nearly 8-to-1. Child welfare systems across the country might be able to replicate that ratio if given the benefits of flexible funding.

"We've taken our money and spent it on in-home services, except for Title IV-E dollars because we couldn't," says Jim Drendel, manager of the Larimer County Division of Children, Youth and Families. "But now we can."

Statewide, Colorado is implementing a wide range of child welfare reforms under Gov. John Hickenlooper's "Keeping Kids Safe and Families Healthy" agenda. The Child Welfare Demonstration Project, in the form of the Title IV-E waiver, is an important piece of the governor's overall plan for improvement. In fact, Colorado was so eager to participate in the demonstration project that it was the first state to apply in 2012.

"The Title IV-E waiver makes the federal government a true partner in our efforts," says Reggie Bicha, executive director of the Colorado Department of Human Services. "We don't believe that children should have to experience abuse or neglect, or be put into a restrictive placement, before they and their families receive the services they need. We need to align our funding with what we know works best for kids."

Colorado has made tremendous progress in recent years in safely reducing the need for foster care by taking innovative approaches that keep children safe and make families strong. Since 2009, the number of children under age 18 in foster care has decreased by 18.6 percent, which is nearly three times higher than the national percentage.

Colorado's progress, however, had created an unintended consequence. As a result of Colorado maintaining fewer children in foster care, the level of federal government support to the state was reduced. The Child Welfare Demonstration Project changes all that, allowing Colorado to offer families a wider array of services that have been proven to be effective in preventing child abuse and neglect.

For example, Colorado plans to expand "differential response" from five pilot counties to all 64 counties. Differential response is a recognized "best practice" for serving families with children identified as at risk of abuse or neglect. This early intervention technique addresses family stresses head-on, such as economic issues or parental substance abuse, so that child maltreatment never occurs in the first place.

"You have to know in your brain and in your heart that families can succeed," says Ginny Riley, director of the Larimer County Department of Human Services. "Our job is to give families the tools to do just that."

Larimer County believes in Austin Strauser. The innovative services that the county provides him and his family brought to the surface the inner strength, sweet demeanor and gentle humor that Austin and his mother always knew he had, even as others doubted him. As a result, Austin's greatest wish has come true.

"I can't believe I'm in regular school now with regular kids taking regular classes," he says.

But that's exactly what has happened. For the first time in his life, Austin says, he's truly happy. He can envision a positive future for himself as a Marine or Navy Seal.

His mother beams: "He's doing great. I'm so proud of him."

# Investing wisely in children and families

The federal Child Welfare Demonstration Project, signed into law in 2011, allows states to apply for a waiver so that they may better target their share of Title IV-E dollars on prevention and permanency services designed to keep children safely out of foster care. The bulk of those dollars currently is spent to maintain children in foster care.

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## Demonstration Project states for 2012:

Arkansas | Colorado | Illinois | Massachusetts | Michigan  
Pennsylvania | Utah | Washington | Wisconsin

## Title IV-E extension states:

California | Florida | Indiana | Ohio | Oregon

Additional states are applying for 10 more spots available in 2013





A maximum of 10 states per year may participate in 2012, 2013 and 2014 – 30 states in total. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services approved demonstration projects for all nine states that completed applications in 2012: Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Utah, Washington and Wisconsin.

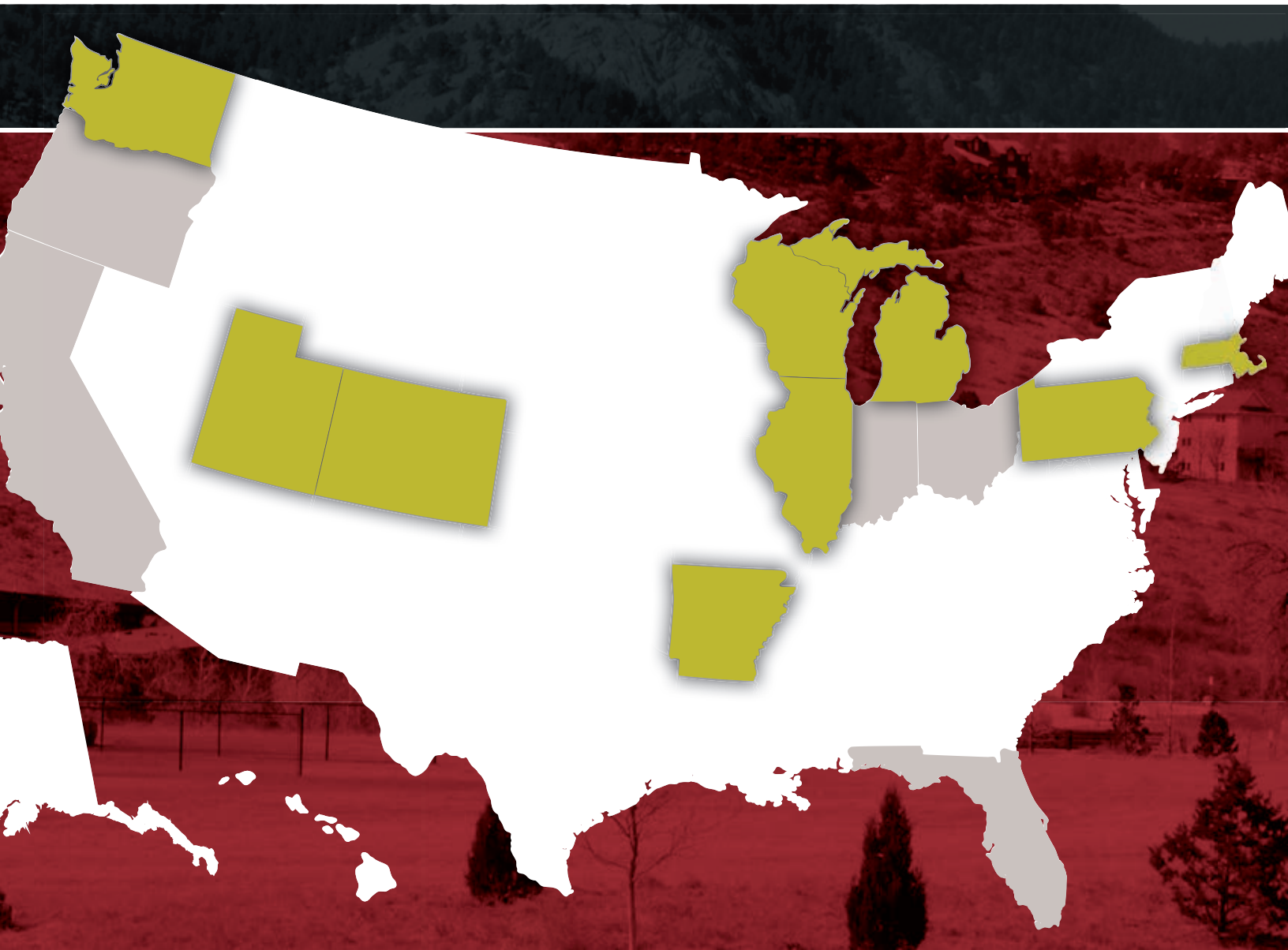
In addition, five states – California, Florida, Indiana, Ohio and Oregon – received extensions of Title IV-E waivers they had received under previous federal action. That means 14 states currently are developing and implementing innovative prevention and permanency services supported by flexible funding.

Evaluation of these services is ongoing. Current waivers outline how states can better target available resources to improve outcomes for children and families, but they are limited in number and scope. At the same time, they inform **the urgent need to reform the federal child welfare finance system comprehensively**

so that all states can make smarter investments to support more effective services.

In Florida, we already have seen that the path toward hope is achieved by providing more families the services they need to keep their children safe and raise them successfully at home. Through its Title IV-E waiver, Florida was able to shift how it spent child welfare dollars. As the state safely reduced the number of children in foster care by 38 percent, it redirected those dollars into new services aimed at helping more vulnerable children and families in more ways.

Before the waiver, the state spent about \$12 on foster care for every \$1 spent on prevention and permanency services. At the end of five years, that ratio shifted dramatically to \$3 for every \$1.







*A range of challenging conditions within a community must be addressed in order to keep children truly safe. This can be done by restoring some of the community spirit that served families so well in the past.*



# Because It Works

Hope comes in a variety of forms to  
move Philadelphia forward





Bells ring, doors swing open and streams of children pour onto the mural-lined sidewalks and streets of Philadelphia. School is out. It's 3 p.m., and so begins the most dangerous time of the day to be a child.

On West Jefferson Street, children scurry home to the Norman Blumberg Projects, two notorious tenement-style high-rises that glare at one another over a menacing courtyard below. Will a dealer emerge from the shadows to offer them drugs? Will they get caught in crossfire?

For these children, their biggest hope is to reach the ground-floor elevator door of the apartments unscathed.

About three miles away on North 10th Street, a similar group of children starts arriving at a sparkly rec center built six years ago by a generous community donor. Some of the kids eat a healthy snack before doing their homework with volunteer mentors who help them with the hard stuff. Others head upstairs to the gym-like surroundings to take part in an after-school program that revolves around the game of squash.

For more than 100 vulnerable children in Philadelphia, hope comes in the form of a racquet sport that originated in 19th century England.

And it is working.

Today in America, too many children live in fear. For them, safety can be elusive, whether it is the risk of abuse or neglect in their homes, violence in their schools or gunfire in their neighborhoods.

In cities across this nation, neighborhoods can be deadly for young people. Homicide is the second leading cause of death in the U.S. for ages 10 to 24 and the leading cause of death among African Americans of that age group, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In Philadelphia, though, two powerful voices are leading a chorus of change that is challenging old assumptions about the role of government, breaking down barriers and reshaping how government and the community work together to keep children safe and make families strong. They understand that the traditional approach in child welfare – one that focuses mostly on rescuing children who already have been harmed – is outdated. Adverse conditions within a community, including the scourge of youth violence, also must be addressed in order to keep children truly safe.

"The Department of Human Services (DHS) is a public safety agency, just as much as our police department and fire department," says Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, who assumed office five years ago and inherited a child welfare department in disarray.

Nutter hired Anne Marie Ambrose as commissioner of DHS, which oversees child protection services. Since 2008, the number of children in foster care in Philadelphia has decreased by 37 percent, and about 1,000 fewer children a year are entering foster care today compared with 2008. Together, Nutter and Ambrose have created a vision of

20 “Despair and apathy are two powerful forces you have to fight against. When communities give up, that’s when you really have problems.”

– Mayor Michael Nutter



community engagement that is transforming tough neighborhoods into bastions of hope.

“Child welfare is a community responsibility,” Ambrose says. “Government alone can’t do it. What we’re creating in Philadelphia is intuitive. At DHS, we never before asked for help because we were the ones supposed to be providing the help. Now, we’re asking for help from the community all the time.”

That philosophy is reflected in a comprehensive reform of DHS that moves the agency away from a centralized administration to one that has handed over the responsibilities of case management and case coordination to established and respected community nonprofits.

One of those organizations, Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha (APM), recently helped a neighborhood seize back control of a playground that had been ceded to drug dealers and other criminal elements. The Rainbow de Colores playground cost \$180,000 to redevelop in 2011 with support from the city’s parks and police departments – although neighborhood residents really were the ones responsible, having committed to maintain the open space.

“The message to the community was, ‘We are not going to revitalize this playground for you, but if the community is there to make it happen, we will be there to support you,’” says Jennifer Rodriguez, APM deputy vice president. “If the community does nothing, then nothing will get done.”

The transformation was obvious soon after the playground reopened when a bride and groom decided to use the park for their wedding. “A new beginning,” says Anthony Medina, who owns a used furniture store nearby, carrying on the commercial legacy of his father, whose grocery store served the neighborhood for years. “After we fixed the playground, there was more hope among the people. People actually walk around the neighborhood now. People come out of their houses.”

In contrast, the children living at Blumberg Projects stay cooped up inside their apartments after school – for their own safety but not necessarily their own good. Nutter and Ambrose are working to build hope for them, too. “Despair and apathy are two powerful forces you have to fight against,” Nutter says. “When communities give up, that’s when you really have problems.”

Every community, no matter how impoverished, has hope waiting to be tapped. In Philadelphia, community pride leaps from 3,300 building murals that tell stories of heroes, triumphs and hopes. An urban art gallery, the murals are the makings of a city strategy in the 1980s to harness the talents of graffiti artists and turn their work into a positive.

The city’s mural arts program continues today. The project not only gives youth somewhere to go and something to do after school, it invites the entire community to participate in producing the murals. As a result, Nutter says, almost none of the murals gets defaced because communities have invested their hearts and souls into the creation of them.

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– Commissioner  
Anne Marie Ambrose



21 22



Nutter recalls how a similar community spirit nurtured the West Philadelphia neighborhood where he was raised. Every Saturday, families got together to spruce up the block. Parents hosed down stoops while children picked up litter on sidewalks.

“I grew up in a time and in a community where adults felt they had a responsibility for every child who lived on the block,” the mayor says. “What we’re doing isn’t about trying to get back to the days of old, but it is about re-establishing some of that sense of community from the past because it works.”

To build a community of hope requires government leaders to break down silos and reach out to non-traditional partners – like philanthropist and squash enthusiast Chase Lenfest, who built the rec center on North 10th. The SquashSmarts program that occupies the second floor has been a roaring success. Every middle school youth who has started the program has gone on to college. Every last one.

“It’s not fair that some children don’t have the same access to quality education and safe environments

that other children do,” Lenfest says. “It’s also not fair that I had more help in learning to play squash than other kids have had.”

Ambrose had heard that Lenfest was looking for more families to use his gift to the community – and she definitely had those families. The department’s parent cafés, informal dinners where parents gather to support each other and learn to become better parents, have begun taking place at the Lenfest Center.

Ambrose and Nutter understand that to improve the safety and overall well-being of children, government and all facets of the community must work together to end the youth violence that has destroyed families and devastated neighborhoods.

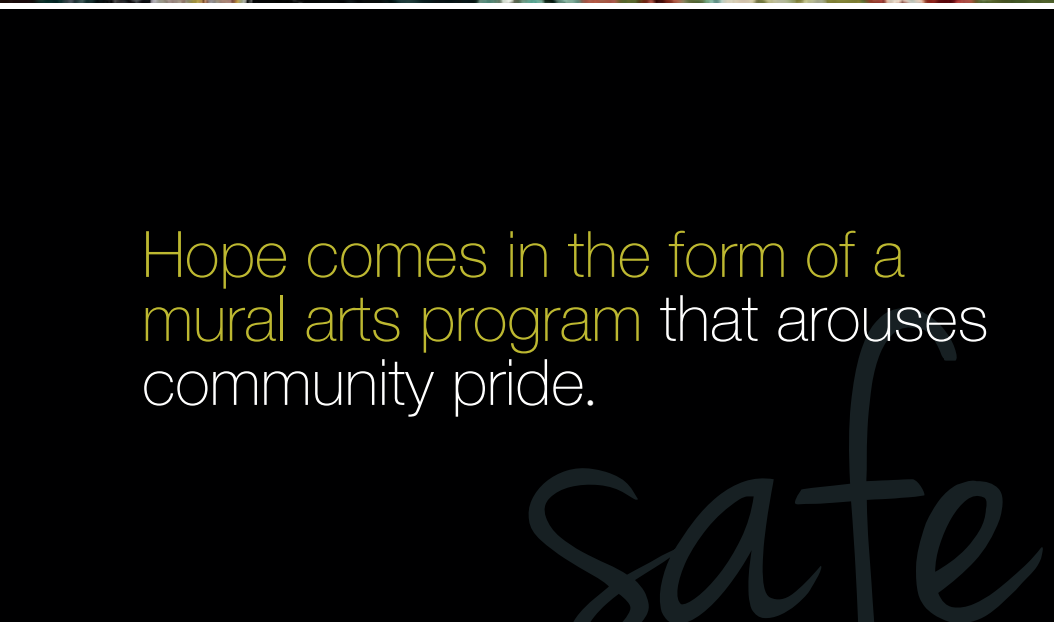
“Violence is never between just the individuals involved,” Nutter says. “When one guy shoots another guy, their families are affected – and more than that. If a child is coming home from school and sees somebody lying dead in the street, maybe sees the police tape and remnants of the blood, how do you





Hope comes in the form of a playground  
that a neighborhood took back from the  
criminals who had claimed it.

strong



Hope comes in the form of a  
mural arts program that arouses  
community pride.

safe







Hope comes in the form of an after-school program that revolves around the racquet sport of squash.

think that affects that child? Don't you think that child is going to have nightmares? Is that child going to act out in school the next day? When there is violence, the whole block, the whole neighborhood – every family and every child – is damaged by it.”

In Philadelphia, the challenge is to transform communities damaged by youth violence into communities where children are inspired by hope. Nutter and Ambrose mean to do just that with the help of many, many hands – and perhaps a few more squash courts.

## Philadelphia relies on several tools to build a community of hope and continue its momentum of progress:

- Pennsylvania's participation in the Child Welfare Demonstration Project will allow Philadelphia DHS to invest federal child welfare dollars on services that strengthen families, prevent child maltreatment and keep children safely out of foster care.
- Philadelphia is partnering with the federal government through a National Forum for Youth Violence Prevention grant awarded in 2012. The forum is a White House initiative involving several federal agencies that serve children. The grant allows Philadelphia to learn about effective methods used in other cities to stem youth violence – although the city already has innovative initiatives of its own, including the mayor's Violence Prevention Collaborative, which Ambrose co-chairs with the police commissioner and the administrative family court judge.
- As current president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Nutter is using the bully pulpit to address youth violence. He and New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu launched Cities United in 2011. This collaborative effort among city mayors, federal agencies and national nonprofits and foundations – including Casey Family Programs – places the issue of violence involving African American males at the forefront of municipal agendas and recommends national violence reduction strategies.



# Building Communities of Hope

Casey Family Programs is committed to Building Communities of Hope, an agenda for change that inspires counties, cities and neighborhoods across America to come together to keep children safe and make families strong.

Everyone plays a part in working with the child welfare system  
to give hope to children and families

Casey Family Programs is committed to Building Communities of Hope, an agenda for change that inspires counties, cities and neighborhoods across America to come together to keep children safe and make families strong.

We recognize that creating better futures for children and families is not possible unless we take into consideration the community conditions that surround them. If a community is healthy – if it is safe, supportive and teeming with opportunities – then we will have put in place the elements that children need to thrive.

**Child welfare systems alone cannot possibly address all of the conditions that negatively impact children and their families.** Every child and every family needs allies in their community. And every community needs bold leaders from all walks of life who commit to work together to create better lives for all children and their families.

Communities often have the capacity to build hope, thanks to the many individuals and organizations working to improve lives. But to truly make a difference, they must break down silos, rally around a shared vision and pursue common goals.

**Public officials** can articulate a bold vision, enter into community partnerships and adopt policies that build hope.

**Judges and lawyers** can ensure that children and families are given the opportunity and support to remain safely together.

**Law enforcement** can help build coalitions that reduce the youth violence that plagues communities.

**Local school districts** can ensure that children have the quality education, peers and mentors necessary to be successful.

**Colleges and universities** can provide research, training and opportunities for effective collaboration.

**Local businesses and corporations** can provide job opportunities and financial support.

**Faith-based communities** can give children and families the hope, comfort and services.

**Foundations and philanthropies** can offer funding, creativity and strategic support.

**Health systems** can ensure that children and families are fit enough to thrive.

**Substance-abuse services** can address the addictions that set back families.

**Job-training services** can put parents and older youth on productive career paths.

**Public-housing authorities** can provide quality housing and create safe environments for raising children.

**You** can work within your community to build hope for children and families.

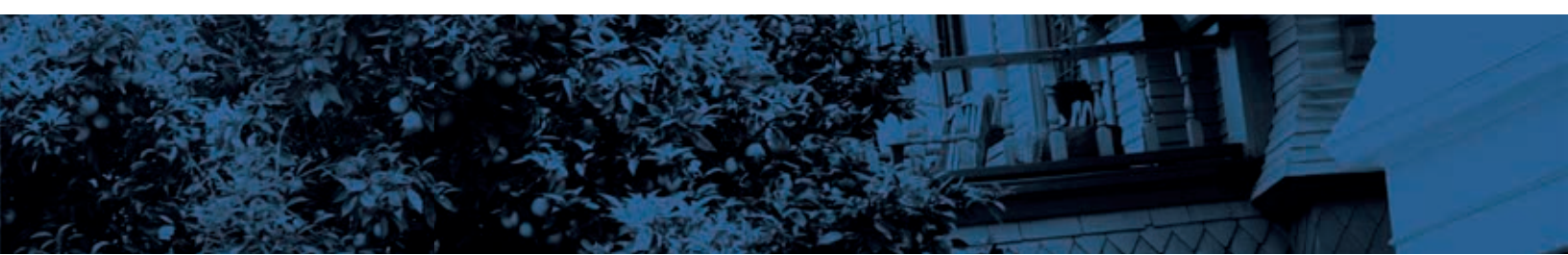


safe children  
strong families  
supportive  
communities





community



# Setting a Good Example

Leaders emerge  
out of a Los Angeles  
community initiative that  
forges strength and builds hope

At Norwood Elementary School in Los Angeles, children learn the fundamentals of reading, writing and arithmetic as their parents lay the foundations for building a community of hope.

A relaxed group of parents congregates each school day inside a Norwood classroom set aside expressly for them. On an unseasonably cool March morning, a few industrious mothers cut shamrocks out of green construction paper, stringing together garlands to decorate the hallways for St. Patrick's Day. Another mom knits quietly while other parents engage in a lively conversation in Spanish, smiling and laughing the hours away.

The moments may seem mundane, yet they are profound. At Norwood Elementary and other venues within a five-square-mile area southwest of downtown Los Angeles, seeds of progress are taking root through the Magnolia Community Initiative. The initiative is a national model for mobilizing residents and organizational partners to build a community culture that can sustain strong families and keep children safe.

Peel away the layers of academic research and social theory that went into developing the Magnolia Community Initiative and it is about building a community of hope for the 35,000 children who live there – 65 percent of whom are being raised in poverty.

Magnolia's community of hope follows this path: By encouraging social interaction among parents, a bond forms among them. From that supportive community, leaders emerge. Those leaders become ambassadors for the community and – in partnership with organizations – advocate for the children and families who live there. The community grows strong, helping to erase the feelings of social isolation that can lead families to desperation and despair.

Rosalba Naranjo, a mother who was raising three children in a difficult marriage, was on a desperate search for hope when she walked across the threshold of the parents' room at Norwood and entered a new world. A parent leader reached out, and Naranjo – against her introverted instincts – grabbed hold.

Naranjo listened intently as the leader guided other parents through a Magnolia Community Initiative curriculum that focused on the "protective factors" needed for families to keep children safe – attributes such as strength, resilience and social attachment.

"The protective factors are qualities that individuals and families already have – they already are in the home,"

"I feel like I have much responsibility to be an example to my children and to other parents.

I like being able to draw out the leaders that lie within them."

– Rosalba Naranjo

says Lilia Perez, a Magnolia Community Initiative representative. "It's just a matter of reinforcing them."

Naranjo was moved by the message of hope and the show of support from the other parents at Norwood. She began to recognize the strength and resilience inside her, summoning that spirit to remake her marriage and create a safe environment at home for her children and for herself. Over time, Naranjo gained enough self-confidence to teach other parents in the community the same curriculum on protective factors that so inspired her.

"Before it was a matter of learning for me and for me only," she says. "Now my focus is on teaching other parents. I worry about them. That's why I feel like I have to take this information to them. I feel like I have much responsibility to be an example to my children and to other parents. I like being able to draw out the leaders that lie within them."

The Magnolia Community Initiative's ambition to spawn community leaders is part of its overall mission to improve the safety of children, quality of parenting, economic stability of families, educational success of children, and health and well-being of the entire community. In the 500 city blocks that the initiative serves, two-thirds of the 35,000 children live in poverty, one in three is obese, four in 10 enter





kindergarten unprepared, and four in 10 fail to graduate from high school on time. The neighborhood also has higher than average rates of child abuse, child neglect and spousal abuse.

Children's Bureau of Southern California, a nonprofit that aims to prevent child abuse and neglect, sparked the Magnolia Community Initiative and its growing number of partnerships. Children's Bureau continues to be a steering partner to the initiative – although agency CEO Alex Morales is quick to say the real forces driving the movement are the families and other partner organizations within the community.

"We began this effort not by looking to simply add and offer more services but by studying the complexity of the needs within the community," he says. "We looked at the health, poverty and education problems and wanted to be part of a larger effort to tackle full-scale community change. There is no real genius to what we are doing. Everyone is talking about it. We are just doing it."

The community initiative is propelled by a partnership of more than 70 organizations – public, private, faith-based, nonprofit and philanthropic – including the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services and Casey Family Programs. The partner network also includes service providers that offer and accept referrals, but Lila Guirguis, initiative director,

says it is not about being just a service network. "It is so much more than that. It's about creating a learning opportunity where organizations test their ideas and learn together about what works to create real change."

Morales and Guirguis emphasize that while improved service access and service quality for the community have been positive outcomes of the initiative, they are not the only advantages.

"People don't describe their lives in terms of the services they receive," Morales says. "They talk about how their family nurtured them, how teachers reached out to them. They talk about the social interactions they have within their community."

Services and social interactions share the stage at the Magnolia Place Family Center, another of the community hubs where the theories of the initiative play out. Inside a converted warehouse bathed in natural light, families enjoy a variety of unique amenities, including three saltwater fish tanks and a children's library designed like a treehouse.

The Magnolia Place complex also features a child development center where parents spend several hours a day with their toddlers and take a pledge to spread the knowledge of what they have learned

to their neighbors. Magnolia Place tenants include: a public health clinic; a community bank and loan association; a single office integrating several government agencies that serve children, including the Department of Children and Family Services; a foundation focused on job readiness; and even a children's nature institute that introduces the joys of nature to city kids.

Early indications of success are coming from the residents themselves. Surveys indicate that parents are more aware of the importance of building protective factors in their homes. They openly discuss the paths to keeping children safe and making families strong, such as eliminating social isolation, reducing family stressors and understanding child development milestones. Organizational partners report that providing quality services is easier now because they are working within a seamless community network that offers families more of what they need to thrive. That includes connecting families to the kind of community social support that inspires hope in children.

Quiana Sandres, who lives near the family center, discovered it through a referral by one of the network partner organizations a few years after the center

opened in 2008. "I honestly had no idea it existed," says Sandres, who was busily raising two young children, now 4 and 2. While seeking services for her son, who has ADHD, she visited the center and heard Morales give a talk about the vision and goals of the initiative.

"I was mesmerized," Sandres recalls. "I stood up and asked, 'How do I volunteer?'"

Sandres now is a community ambassador for the initiative, spreading the gospel to her neighbors through Facebook, Instagram and word of mouth.

"Once you walk into Magnolia Place, it draws you in," she says. "All I need is to get somebody to visit just one time, and they'll be back. This has become a place where everybody knows everybody, or is getting to know everybody, because everybody is here. And that's great because everyone needs their neighbors, just like everyone needs their family."

For more information about the Magnolia Community Initiative, read the Casey Family Programs report "Getting to Scale: The Elusive Goal," at: [www.casey.org/magnoliaplace](http://www.casey.org/magnoliaplace)

"Once you walk into Magnolia Place, it draws you in. All I need is to get somebody to visit just one time, and they'll be back."

– Quiana Sandres







The initiative is a national model for mobilizing residents and organizational partners to build a community culture that can sustain strong families and keep children safe.







The real forces driving the movement are the families in the community.



32

strategy

It seems like a simple concept: To better keep children safe and strengthen vulnerable families, resources should be placed in the neighborhoods where they are needed most.

But that does not always happen. In reality, the gap between need and support is often too wide.

Now, a technique called data mapping, long used by corporate America to market goods and services to families, is being used to help communities build hope instead.

Child welfare advocates and organizations are beginning to use data mapping to identify trends and tailor their services to improve the health and well-being of children and families in a particular community.

Data mapping uses Geographic Information Systems to layer specific demographic information along geographic boundaries. For example, researchers can examine the correlation between rates of poverty and reports of child abuse in a neighborhood, ZIP code, county or state. Other common demographic factors explored by child welfare experts include the number of single-parent households, crime rate and density of public housing.

By plugging in different data, researchers can begin to understand why certain areas become hot spots for incidents of child abuse and neglect and high rates of foster care.

The research often prompts further questions. Recent data-mapping projects in Florida, for example, determined that foster care rates were lower in areas with large immigrant populations. The reasons then can be examined.

The maps provide decision-makers with a greater understanding of trends and community needs. In particular, family court judges – who have the final say in determining a child's future – have expressed interest in how this information can shape their perception of the families that come before them. If judges see large concentrations of child abuse cases from a particular street or neighborhood, caseworkers can begin to target intensive prevention measures.

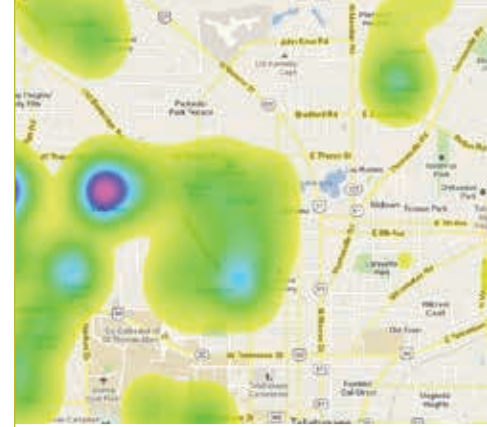
Government officials also use data mapping to determine if a location might be underserved by services such as substance abuse treatment, respite care or job-training programs that can play a part in keeping children safe and families together.

Information gleaned from data mapping also can help community organizers bring neighborhoods together. Problems that seem intractable or complex suddenly become easier to understand, and residents and stakeholders are encouraged to join in common cause to find solutions.

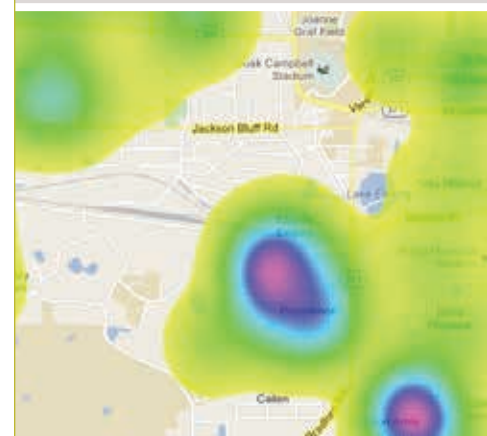
Casey Family Programs is involved in a data-mapping project in northwest Georgia and northeast Alabama counties where rates of foster care are high. The Appalachian Neighbor Permanency Project brings together child welfare leaders with other regional stakeholders in juvenile justice, mental health, education, the judiciary and law enforcement.

The project will review child and family data and examine current practices and initiatives designed to strengthen families, keep children safely at home and expedite permanency for children in foster care. The plan is to take what is learned to develop and implement new child welfare strategies.

The Appalachian Neighbor Permanency Project dovetails with the fundamental mission of Casey Family Programs by using a variety of innovative tools and methods to protect vulnerable children, strengthen families and build communities of hope.



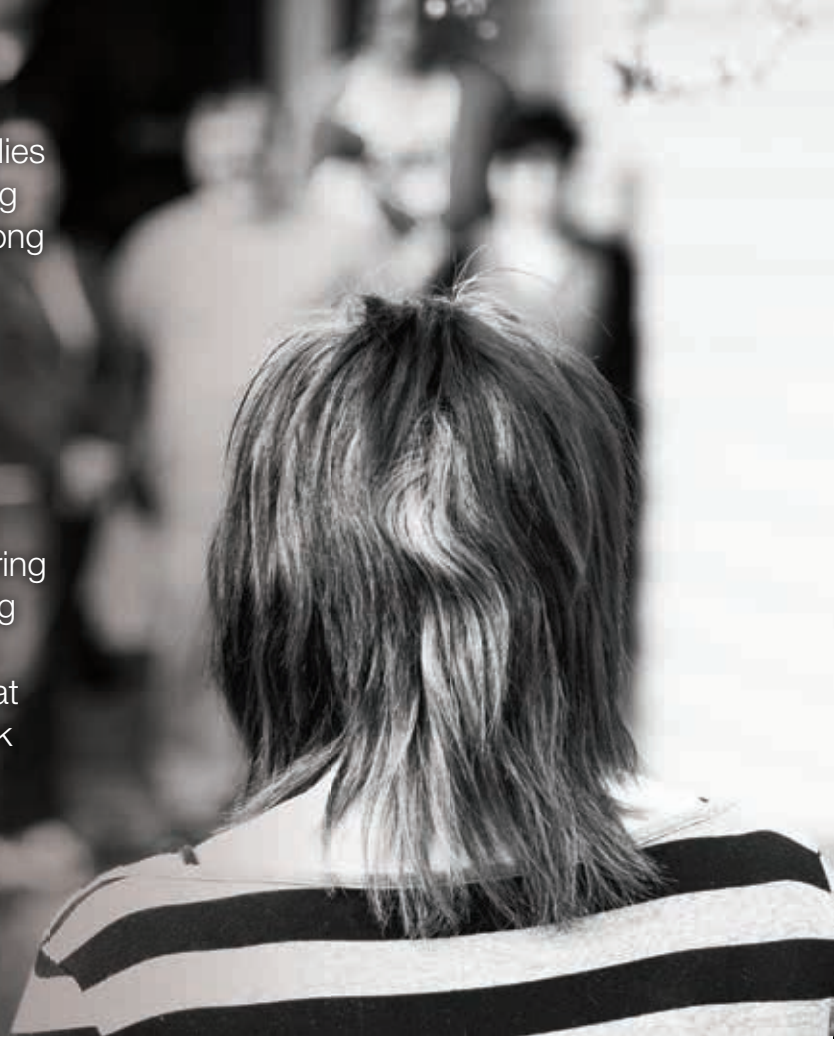
By plugging in different data, researchers can determine why certain areas become hot spots for incidents of child abuse and neglect and high rates of foster care.





Casey Family Programs has provided direct services to children in foster care and their families since our founding in 1966. We believe in finding every child in foster care a safe, stable and lifelong family, whether through family reunification, kinship care or adoption. We draw on our experience to demonstrate best practices for serving children and families through the work of our field offices in Arizona, California, Idaho, Texas and Washington.

We work every day to achieve the goal of ensuring all children in our direct care have a safe, lifelong family to call their own. Raevyn is one of those children. Her powerful story of hope shows what is possible when communities and families work together to provide a path to permanency for every child.



# The Path to Permanency





My name is Raevyn and I'm 14 years old. My grandma grew up on the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota and I'm a quarter Ojibwe. My mother and father never really married and they both had alcoholism issues and drug problems, so I lived between my mom and dad and grandma. I know my dad and mom loved me but they just couldn't really take care of me. They needed help with their own lives. My dad really wanted to be a good father but he was in and out of jail. He really tried. My mother needed help with basic parenting. She was kind of clueless but she was a really nice person, too.

There was a lot of fighting at my house and every once in a while the police had to show up, and there was a lack of basic child care. I always knew in the back of my head that it wasn't quite right.

My dad passed away when I was 7. He committed suicide and that was kind of hard.

About a year ago, I got sick and went to the hospital and they didn't really know what was going on with me at first. They knew I had hepatitis, but they just weren't sure what from. By this time, there were social workers talking to me and they couldn't reach my mom at all, and after a while, they finally got ahold of her on the phone, but she never showed up at the hospital or anything.

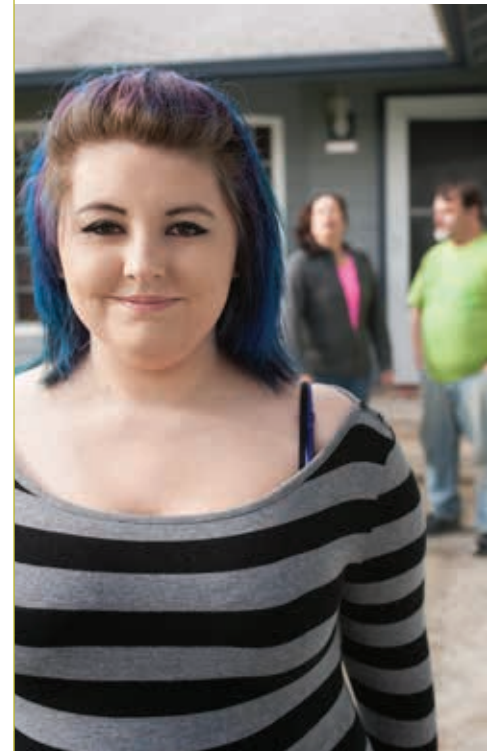
My mom died from a heart attack, a really sudden thing. After my mom passed away, my Aunt Carla and I talked about her adoption, trying to get me into permanency.

Permanency means that there's a place where people really love you unconditionally and take care of you. They are there to support you throughout your life, not only for a little while or just until you turn 18.

A couple of months ago, I moved in with my Aunt Carla and I consider all of her sons and daughters to be like my brothers and sisters and Aunt Carla is like a mom. I can't wait until adoption makes this my permanent family.

I definitely know that every kid wants to have a good family support system and loving parents to know that they're cared for and don't need to worry about things that parents usually worry about, and just be a kid. And they can know that they're always loved unconditionally and that they're always going to be safe.

*Raevyn's story is not yet finished. You can follow Raevyn on her path to permanency by visiting [Casey.org](http://Casey.org) and following us on Facebook and Twitter.*



“Permanency means that there’s a place where people really love you unconditionally and take care of you.”

– Raevyn, 14

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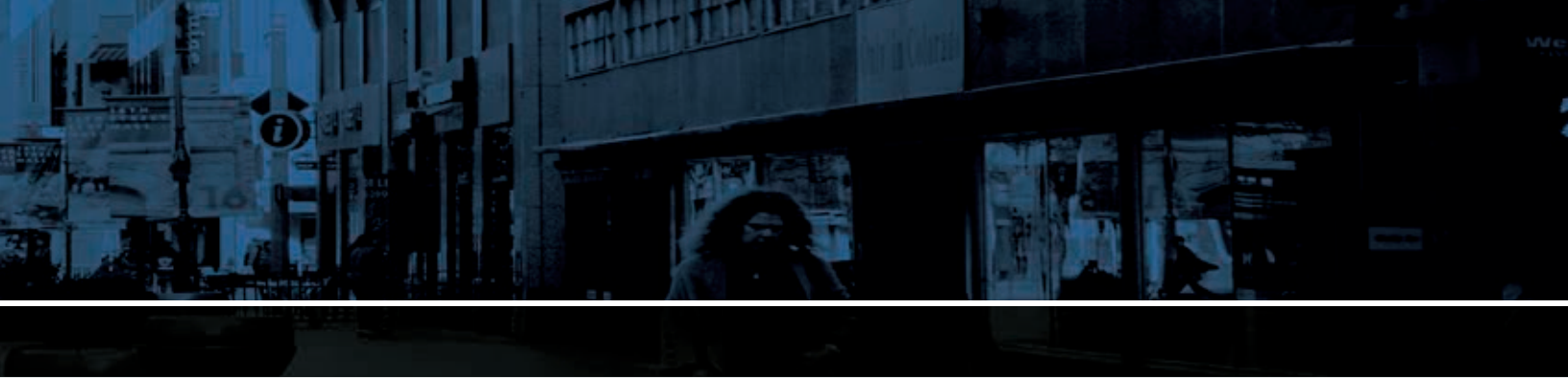
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210.616.0813

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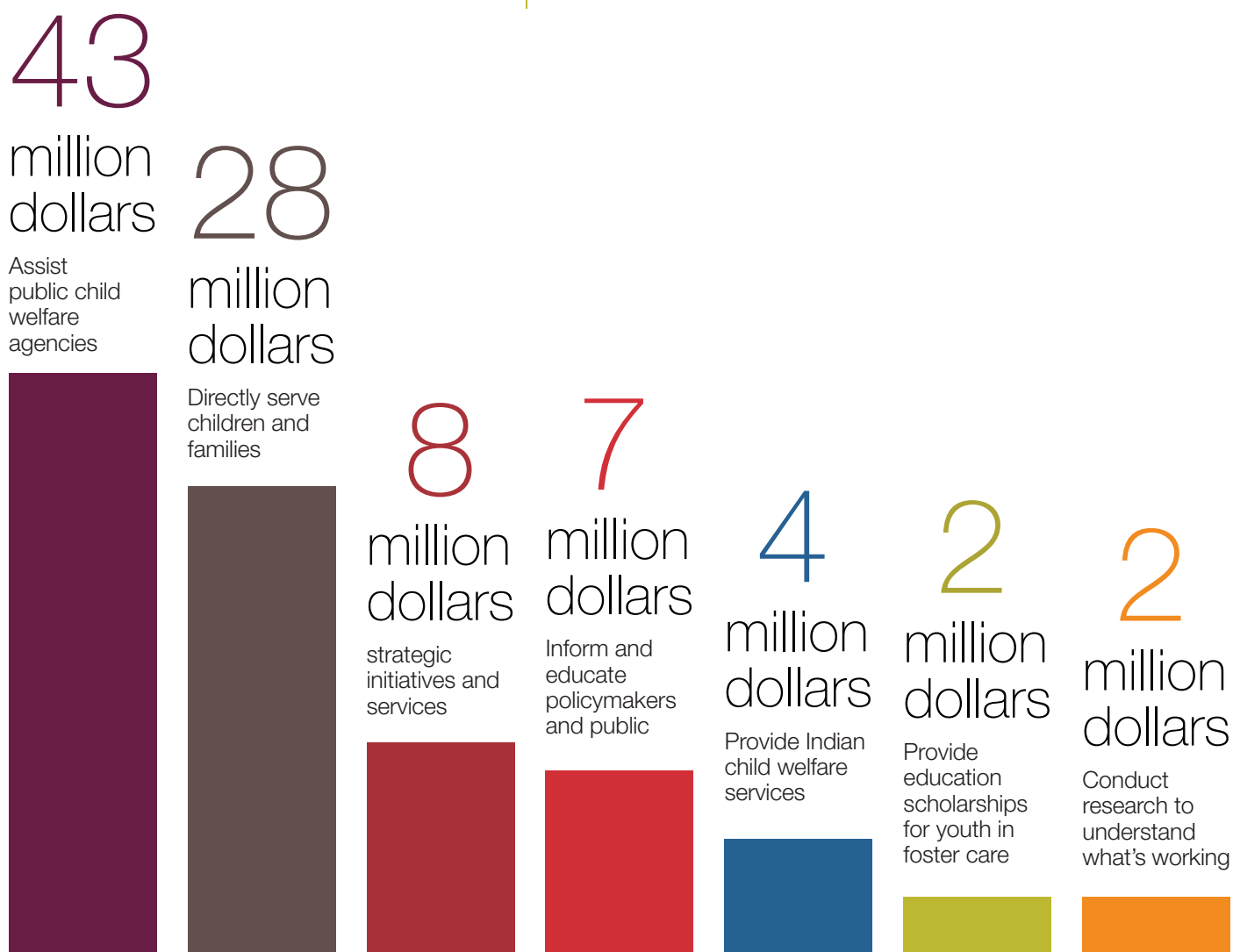
Yakima Field Office  
404 North Third Street  
Yakima, WA 98901  
509.457.8197



At the end of 2012,  
Casey Family Programs  
assets totaled \$2.1 billion.

In 2012, Casey Family Programs spent \$118 million in pursuit of our vision of safely reducing the need for foster care and building communities of hope for all of America's children and families.

Most of that money is spent on strategic initiatives, services and research to help ensure that all children can have a safe, loving and permanent family.



Spending on strategic initiatives, services and research







A picture of hope captured by Philadelphia's mural arts program.





# success



**casey** family programs

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having the  
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