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A special thank you to



for sponsoring this Annual Report!

Serving children, youth, adults, and families since 1937

"My wish for you is that you continue.
Continue to be who you are,
to astonish a mean world with
your acts of kindness."

-Maya Angelou

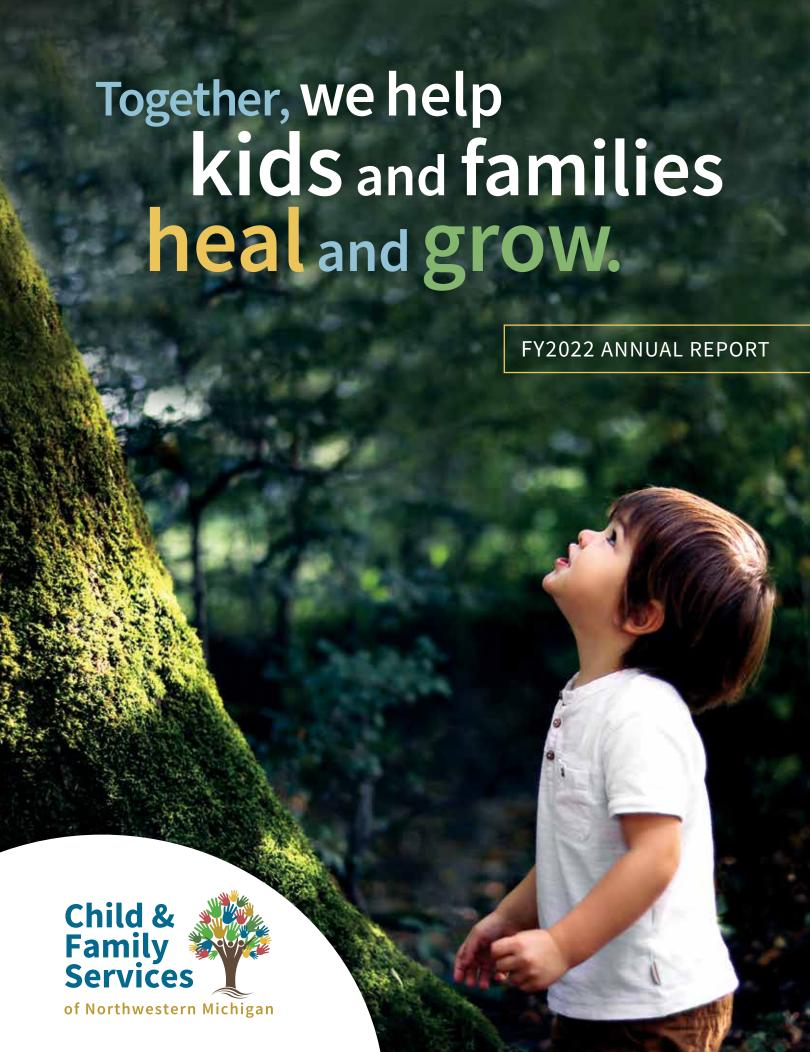


Platinum Transparency 2023 Candid.

Our child welfare, counseling, and shelter programs are accredited by CARF International, assuring the more than 2,500 businesses, individuals, and organizations who contributed to our work last year of our commitment to clinical, administrative, and fiscal excellence.

Candid has awarded CFS the highest level of organizational transparency, reflecting our commitment to integrity and accountability.





## **Our IMPACT**

#### In FY 2022, Child and Family Services provided:

**3,070** counseling sessions. Of those, 1,270 were for kids, and 1,140 for teens through our Youth Services program

**1,944** supervised visits and safe exchanges

**39** families with the strengthening support of our Wraparound program

102 children a safe place to stay with loving foster families

40 children a forever family through adoption

**43,296** hours of community service performed by **95** YouthWork members

**300** caring responses to callers on our Youth Services crisis line



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## From Our Executive Director

Dear Friends:

The old saying goes, "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes." I'd change that a bit, with all due respect to Benjamin Franklin: In this world nothing can be certain except death, taxes, and the potential for growth, the power of transformation, and the exciting possibilities that change brings.



Change management provides us with a good framework to implement growth initiatives and innovation. It encompasses careful planning, excellent execution, and effective communication of a sound strategy. It involves assessing our current organizational landscape, learning from our past successes and failures, and envisioning where we aspire to be in the future. By identifying and closing gaps within our organization, change management helps us align our existing resources with the changes that lie ahead. And the best part? It encourages active engagement from every employee, even those who may initially resist the change. By seeking input from all and fostering a sense of ownership, we can inspire and empower everyone to embrace the change.

Sounds great in theory, doesn't it? But executing change successfully can be fraught. In the past year, we at CFS faced the need to make change amidst inflation and other pressures. We did what we had to do, but not without a few bumps and bruises. Respectful arguments and exhaustive discussions were not uncommon during the process. While not everyone may have been completely satisfied, there was an acceptance that enabled us to move forward.

We began to witness the positive impact of the changes we implemented. But perhaps more importantly, we committed to learning from both our successes and our missteps. Through it all, I have been proud of the remarkable services we provided to thousands of individuals across our programs. We kept our focus on mission, and our efforts helped countless people find their own healing, growth, and transformation.

I'm deeply grateful to our Board of Directors, Trustees, and our entire management team for their wisdom, grace, and professionalism as we navigated these challenging waters. Each of them carries a palpable love for CFS and the fine work that goes on here.

Our recent challenges have made us stronger than ever. We are a resilient and courageous community, fully aware that the problems we seek to ameliorate are bigger than we are, and that the systems we work in can be cumbersome and unresponsive. But we are fueled by big plans to create new pathways for growth and transformation, for ourselves and the people we serve. Stay tuned as we continue this journey! I hope that we can count on your support.

Warmly,



## **our MISSION**

To support the safety and well-being of those we serve in times of crisis, challenge, and life transition.



## our CORE VALUES

**RESPECT:** We will treat all stakeholders—clients, volunteers, staff, referral sources, and all members of our community—with compassion and dignity.

**INNOVATION:** We will respond to client and community needs with forward-thinking, trauma-informed, and evidence-based best practices in education and programming.

**SERVICE:** We will serve by providing high-quality, efficient, and versatile training and programs for the greatest benefit of all stakeholders in a clean, inviting environment.

**EXCELLENCE:** We will conduct ourselves with the highest standards of integrity, ethics, and fiscal responsibility.

**STABILITY:** We will consistently work together to maintain a stable organization to accomplish our mission.

**SUSTAINABILITY:** We are committed to environmental responsibility and protecting the world in which we and our stakeholders live.



#### What do you think about when you hear the word growth?

Something getting larger? Often, that's exactly what growth is. It is a delight to watch children grow—getting taller and stronger. And we see the trees and plants around us grow, sometimes slowly and sometimes, it seems, overnight. But growth can also mean change. We can grow as people; our feelings can grow in strength; and organizations like Child and Family Services (CFS) can grow to address new needs and concerns.

Growth is taking place all over the agency, as we rise to meet the needs of those we serve. Our counselors are continually updating their professional development, and furthering their expertise in the trauma-informed care CFS specializes in. Our Wraparound program works tirelessly to help grow support systems for children with Severe Emotional Disturbance and their families. Our Foster Care program has experienced change over this past year as well, as we grow to fill the need of families in crisis.

Perhaps one of the greatest times of growth happens as adolescents near adulthood. Clients in that stage of life are served by many of our programs, but by Youth Services in particular. Our programs have grown over the past several years to provide shelter for homeless and runaway youth at Pete's Place; a youth crisis line; counseling; substance use disorder prevention; and independent living education. These CFS programs have grown to meet the changing needs of this population, and will continue to grow and adapt in order to best serve them.

One program that has grown in the physical sense is CFS' YouthWork program. This earn and learn program, pairing young people with caring mentors who teach them job and life skills, has provided community service all over the state. Growth has occurred not only in the number of participants, but in areas served and collaborations gained.

Growth and change have also happened in our community services, such as the Free Legal Aid Clinic; community education offerings; and participation in community forums and events.

The common thread through all of these growth stories is that CFS is an organization that is not afraid to change—and grow—in response to its stakeholders' needs. We are so glad that you are a part of our community and invite you to grow along with us.

"Growth is never by mere chance; it is the result of forces working together."

-James Penney



Child and Family Services serves over 3,000 individuals annually in 20 counties throughout northern Michigan.

Our 100+ staff provide counseling, supervised visitation and exchange, parenting education, foster care, adoption, and youth outreach, shelter and support. We facilitate the health and well-being of people in need every day.



## Program HIGHLIGHTS

#### **Foster Care**

While family reunification in a safe home is always preferred, abused or neglected children may be removed from their home by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). CFS works with MDHHS to find foster homes for children, provide treatment and support, and resolve any issues that have made their homes unsafe. Our foster care program provides a temporary haven for children and youth up to age 21. In FY2022, 102 children were placed in loving CFS foster homes.

#### Adoption

When a new permanent living situation is required for abused and neglected children, CFS helps connect them with prospective adoptive parents throughout northern Michigan. **40 children and teens found safe, forever families through adoption in FY2022.** 

#### **Pregnancy Support**

CFS offers free, compassionate, confidential, and non judgmental counseling and support for women experiencing an unplanned pregnancy.

#### **Always A Parent**

For those wanting to improve their parenting skills or those who are having difficulty communicating with a co-parent, the Always A Parent program emphasizes the impact of parents' behavior on their children, and teaches parents positive, effective, and cooperative communication techniques in an enjoyable, interactive way. **45 clients** participated in Always A Parent in FY2022.

#### Counseling

CFS offers counseling to children, youth, adults, families, and couples on a variety of issues. Our counselors utilize a trauma-informed approach as well as other evidence-based models of treatment. We also offer telehealth counseling to allow our clients flexibility while they heal. In FY2022, CFS provided 1,930 counseling sessions to the community.

#### Wraparound

CFS' Wraparound program provides community-based support and individualized planning for children with severe emotional and behavioral disorders and their families. Wraparound helps connect families with a community network of support that brings hope and a sense of belonging. **39 families** 

were strengthened through support from the Wraparound program, which served 150+

#### **Safe Haven**

Safe Haven is a supervised visitation and safe exchange program for families affected by domestic violence or high conflict, and is the only program of its kind in northern Michigan. CFS provides a safe, supervised, age-appropriate, and friendly environment for children to visit with their non-custodial parent or to enable an exchange between parents. Safe Haven facilitated 1,098 visits and 846 safe exchanges in FY2022.

Continued on page 7

## **From Humble Beginnings**

A long journey through foster care, a promising future ahead.

#### By all measures, Dominik, now 17, did not have an easy start in life.

Shortly after birth, he was removed from his biological mother, who was incarcerated, and placed with his adoptive mom, Claudia. The two of them were strongly bonded and Dominick had a happy, stable childhood until 2015, when tragedy struck. Dom, only 9 years old, learned that Claudia was diagnosed with cancer. Only a short time later, she passed, and Dom found himself without parents for the second time in his short life.

#### After Claudia's death, Dom was placed into a guardianship with a relative,

but recalls that this was not the happily ever after he was hoping for. For two years, Dominick suffered physical and emotional abuse before their guardianship was terminated. At 12, Dom became a ward of the state, and began to bounce around between residential treatment facilities and psychiatric units before finally landing in a pre-adoptive placement with his best friend's mom. After living there nearly a year, Dominick was relieved to finally be able to glimpse the light at the end of the tunnel. With the adoption papers in the judge's hands, just days away from finalization, Dom got into a fight with his foster brother, and was kicked out of the house.

So Dom was forced to start over, yet again, in a new foster home. Due to the trauma he had experienced early on in life, he struggled with authority and often had difficulty regulating his emotions. After staying in this foster home for 8 months, Dominick was moved yet again. This is when he met Nikki Kaufman, his new CFS caseworker, and Sarah and Andy Melius, his new foster parents.

At the Meliuses, Dom fit in instantly. It wasn't always easy, but his new family, especially their four young kids, absolutely adored him. After six months, however, things started to get rocky, and Dom ran away from home. This happened twice before he ended up in non-secure detention. After one week, Dom went AWOL and, when found, was sent to secure detention for two months. During this time, the Meliuses continued to stay in contact with him. The kids would write letters, the family visited when they could, and they participated in family counseling. After his two months were up, Dom returned home to the Meliuses, but again, he struggled. Two months later, he stole the family car and ran away yet again. He was then placed in secure detention for the second time and stayed for nearly five months while the state tried to find a long-term foster placement that would be able to meet his needs. Still, the Meliuses stuck by him. Sarah and Andy's daughter, June (age six at the time), would write Dom "notes" and mail them to

him while he was in detention.



Nikki Kaufman Lead Foster Care Specialist

and to make them a part

of our lives now."







"Love is like a tree; it grows of its own accord, it puts down deep roots into our whole being."

-Victor Hugo

Nikki recalls June saying that even though Dom didn't live in their house anymore, he was still a part of their family because he was in their hearts.

Typically when a child goes into detention, DHHS takes over case management. But in this instance, Nikki and the rest of the CFS team worked closely with DHHS so that she was able to remain as his caseworker. "The last thing he needed was another abandonment," said Nikki. As much as the Meliuses were there for him, and as much as they hoped that Dom would get the treatment he needed to be able to live at home safely, there were no guarantees. "It was important to everyone that I be allowed to continue to advocate for him and keep him on my caseload," Nikki said.

CFS supported Dom in other ways, too. "One thing people don't know," Nikki shared, "is that when a child is in detention, their Medicaid actually gets shut off." In order for Dom to continue to receive counseling, both individually and with the Meliuses, CFS had to pay out of pocket. We were able to do this, in part, thanks to a grant from the Manistee County Community Foundation. "Being in jail, even kid jail, was not good for Dom," Nikki recalls. "We know that when it comes to kids who make poor decisions and engage in criminal behavior, the root of that choice is their trauma. They have a lack of impulse control, an inability to make wise decisions. Dom was wired differently— he needed mental health treatment, not punishment."

Finally, on April 27, 2022, Dom was accepted into Pioneer Mental Health facility. Seven months later, he had made enough progress that he was cleared to re-enter the community and was gladly welcomed home by the entire Melius family.

When Nikki first met Dom, she says, he was failing all his classes. He had no interest in college or a future whatsoever. He had no ability to look toward any long-term goals or consider the consequences of his actions. Today, Dominick is a high school graduate, his adoption into the Melius family will be finalized shortly, and he is headed to Ferris State University in the fall.

By all accounts, the Meliuses are a "regular" family. The only difference between them and any other family, said Nikki, is that they never gave up. When everyone else threw in the towel, the Meliuses kept going. "People might be scared," Nikki says, "to take on something like this, because it is hard. It takes true love and dedication to change the lives of kids like Dom. Kids who have experienced more trauma than any of us can comprehend. But they didn't ask for that. You have to be patient and kind. It's our responsibility to care for the kids in our community, to care about the type of people who they're going to be as adults, and to make them a part of our lives now."

"I love Dom's smile," Nikki shared. "I love his ability to smile through the bad. He's done enough work that he can let people in now. He's finally in a place where he feels like he's truly part of the family."

## Program HIGHLIGHTS

#### **Youth Services**

Youth Services offers youth ages 12-20 alternative solutions for navigating life's ongoing challenges. Our outreach workers help youth deal with conflict at home, find temporary or long-term housing, and provide ongoing counseling. Our counselors work with anyone who has run away, has threatened to run away, is in need of protection, may be at risk of homelessness, or is experiencing family conflict. In FY2022, 1,140 hours of youth counseling sessions took place, and we provided support to 300 young people who called the Youth Crisis Line.

#### **Pete's Place Youth Shelter**

Opened in 2007, Pete's Place is the region's first and only youth shelter, created to address our community's teens' need for a safe place to go when things get rough. Pete's Place is free, voluntary, and open to youth who are homeless, have been kicked out, or have run away. In addition to shelter, Pete's provides counseling, life skills education, food, clothing and hygiene items. **Pete's Place provided 732 bed nights in FY2022.** 

#### **YouthWork**

YouthWork, a part of the national AmeriCorps network, is a unique workforce development program serving vulnerable youth and project partners in more than 30 counties throughout Michigan. Our young members learn important job and life skills as they complete conservation and skilled trade projects in their home communities and all across Michigan, including projects in each of Michigan's five national parks and in three national forests. 95 YouthWork members performed over 43,296 hours of community service for nonprofit and public partners in FY2022.

#### **Free Legal Aid Clinic**

The Free Legal Aid Clinic (FLAC) is an opportunity for individuals to receive private, free, and confidential legal advice and problem clarification from volunteer attorneys through the Grand Traverse-Leelanau-Antrim Bar Association. Many FLAC attorneys take on *pro bono* cases for clients meeting certain guidelines.

In FY2022, the Free Legal Aid Clinic served 287 people.



## Program HIGHLIGHTS

#### **Suicide Prevention and Community Education**

When Third Level merged with CFS in 2014, we added a wealth of expertise and experience in community education, especially in suicide prevention and crisis intervention. CFS offers trainings on suicide prevention (Question. Persuade. Refer.), trauma-informed parenting, implicit bias, and other topics. In FY2022 we held 30 community trainings including

QPR and Implicit Bias trainings.



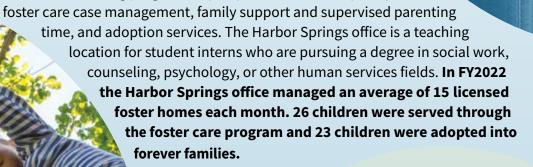
**Question. Persuade. Refer. (QPR)** are three steps anyone can learn to help prevent suicide. The QPR mission is to reduce suicidal behaviors and save lives by providing innovative, practical and proven suicide prevention training. This education empowers all people, regardless of their background, to make a positive difference in the life of someone they know.

**Child and Family Services is offering this training for free to the community** with the support of The Cheese Cup by The Northern Angler in memory of Alex Hawke. We can also provide private QPR training to any group or organization for a small fee. If interested, contact us at cfs@cfs3L.org.

#### **Harbor Springs Office**

Our Harbor Springs office offers a full spectrum of services to children and families in Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, Mackinaw, and Otsego Counties and beyond.

Services include a licensing program for prospective foster/adoptive parents,



"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

-Mahatma Gandhi

## **Empowering Youth**

At a young age (six), Megan was involuntarily pulled from school. Despite many efforts to reintegrate herself into the public school system, she was unable to return for many years. In 2019, after moving in full-time with her biological father and stepmother, she enrolled in high school, starting at 17 as a freshman. Instead of studying to get her GED, which is an equally demanding route, Megan was determined to have the "real experience!" She wanted to go through high school like any other kid, regardless of the delay. A few short months after her start, COVID hit our school systems hard, and derailed her education goals. Last year, in 2021, Megan reconvened her schooling, in person at an alternative high school.

While immersed in this hefty and challenging undertaking, Megan sought to diversify her experiences while she completed her education. From a young age, Megan always had an interest in animals and agricultural science. She was specifically interested in a career as a zoologist or biologist, and began developing goals on this career path. Part of the reason Megan applied to serve on a conservation crew was to get outside and have a unique service experience in the outdoors. Megan said, "When I learned about the opportunity to serve outdoors and meet new people, all while learning new skills and making a difference, I knew I wanted to try it." Little did she know she would actually gain experience directly in her field of choice, serving alongside a partner organization, City Girls Farm, and its lively goat herd.

Megan has been a consistent positive influence in her role with YouthWork Conservation Corps, as she passionately invests herself in the service she carries out, including her impact with her peers. Last year, she served on an all-girls crew, alongside young women who experienced challenges similar to Megan's. Her composure and flexibility set a great example for her teammates and allowed "bumpy" segments of the summer season to go more smoothly. Megan, without a doubt, has a complex and exceptionally inspiring background, having been dealt an unconventional hand of cards throughout life. These trials and triumphs, which shaped her goals and admirable demeanor, allowed her to bond with and uplift her teammates, who all got along wonderfully! Megan was a finalist for the Corps Network 2022 Member of the Year Award. She hopes to continue working with City Girls Farm in their conservation grazing projects, and they have expressed interest in Megan helping their organization after graduation. Megan plans to continue college courses in the pursuit of her bachelor's degree in biology or another science field.

"My Corps experience introduced me to new role models in my community, while giving me an opportunity to bond with my peers, which wasn't something I had been able to do very much."

-Megan Smith, YouthWork Member



"Learning alongside other young adults, who are in similar places in life, helped me grow social skills and connections I'll carry with me for a long time. I felt empowered and comfortable being myself and learning in unfamiliar settings."

Megan Smith YouthWork Member

## **SUPPORTING CFS**

As we reflect on the evolution of CFS through the years, we recognize how often our needs have been met by our community—through the support of volunteers, donors, family and community foundations, other grantors, and many partnerships. This reciprocal relationship helps us find solutions to complex problems. We've been responding since 1937 to community needs, from the crises that separate families, including generational violence and drug addiction, to youth homelessness and mental health parity and access.

Some of our community efforts are seeing progress, including fewer homeless and runaway youth at Pete's Place; indeed, the Coalition to End Homelessness recently announced that our region has reached functional zero for youth homelessness (meaning fewer youth entering homelessness than exiting).

There are also fewer children entering foster care in our state. However, these trends don't tell the whole story, as we continue to see youth and young adults in need of a variety of supports as they enter and then age out of foster care, and a system that needs to do a better job preparing them for independent, successful living.

The number of youth experiencing mental health crises has risen dramatically since COVID and it's been trending upward for the past decade. CFS is actively working with community partners in addressing these serious issues as we advocate for a continuum of care, from prevention to crisis stabilization and residential beds for both adults and children. Our counselors are at full capacity, as we are one of the few organizations that accepts Medicaid and are willing to work with those who are un- or under insured as well. Fundraising helps us cover some of the gaps, but reimbursements simply don't reflect the true cost of counseling; generally speaking, Medicaid covers only about 25-40% of those costs.

There are reasons for optimism. Interest in our YouthWork program is growing, both from prospective participants and community partners. The mentorship of young adults, teaching them life skills alongside work skills to help them build up their confidence and self-esteem and prepare them for the future while they complete community service projects that improve our public spaces, is true prevention work and a win-win for all. CFS is also excited

for the future as we hope and plan for some new programming: parenting coaching during supervised visits; the possible expansion of Safe Haven to Harbor Springs; and a supervised independent living program for 16-19 year-olds in foster care.

As we build our connections with young people, we will build a healthier, stronger community. With your compassion and support, we know that this vision will be realized. Join us by learning how you can help make a difference—one child, one youth, one family at a time!

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."

-Margaret J. Wheatley

## There are many ways you can help!

Your support makes a difference in growing a stronger community.

#### **GIFTS THAT HELP US NOW:**

- Major gifts, tribute gifts, and capital campaign naming opportunities
- Stocks, QCDs (Qualified Charitable Distributions), annuities, and other gifts
- Sponsorship opportunities that benefit CFS and visibly market your business
- In-Kind gifts

#### **GIFTS THAT HELP FUTURE GENERATIONS:**

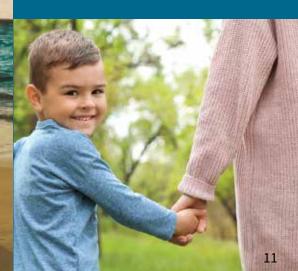
- Name CFS in your estate plan. Sample bequest language is on our website at www.cfsnwmi.org/planned giving
- Name CFS as your IRA Beneficiary

Talk to your financial advisor about other smart giving options that save you tax dollars and make your philanthropic gift go further! Contact us at CFS@cfs3L.org to learn more about our current needs and strategic plans for the future.

For more information about how you can help make a difference, visit cfsnwmi.org/donate or email us at cfs@cfs3L.org.



Gift to realize your vision and hope for the future! Planned gifts allow you to contribute assets in the form of bequests, charitable gift annuities, and gifts of stocks, while benefiting from tax exemptions and savings. Make a lifechanging philanthropic decision to support our community's future generations.



### From Our Board President

Dear Friends:

Child and Family Services of Northwestern Michigan continues to be deeply engaged in the community by partnering with area non-profits and organizations in initiatives to strengthen behavioral health and prevent violence in schools, as well as offering free implicit bias and suicide prevention trainings. In addition, CES' green initiatives promote



suicide prevention trainings. In addition, CFS' green initiatives promote the environmental health of the community with a recently implemented Energy and Emissions Action Plan.

The Board of Directors appreciates the skilled and ardent staff who provide critical support, deliver healing services, and invest in proactive prevention measures to promote the safety and health of those we serve. We are grateful for the volunteers and contributors who join the staff in supporting our community. At a time when the nation is experiencing a decline in the number of contributors to non-profits, the community's support of Child and Family Services is appreciated more than ever.

Krista Goldman

President, Board of Directors

## **DEDICATED**



## **BOARD** of Directors



Chris Mohrhardt Vice President



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#### **Our Board of Trustees**

Over 200 years of cumulative service to Child and Family Services.

Terry Paquet, President
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EmmLee Cameron
Bob Cornwell
Jeremy Hawke
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Galen Krupka
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Rob Tubbs



Plante Moran employees volunteering at our fall event.

## Volunteers help us do more!

Volunteers are an important link to our community and are integral to our mission and the vital work that we do in northern Michigan. We offer a variety of experiences that can make a positive contribution to our organization. Consider joining us to help make a difference in the lives of kids and families! Visit **cfsnwmi/volunteer** to learn more.

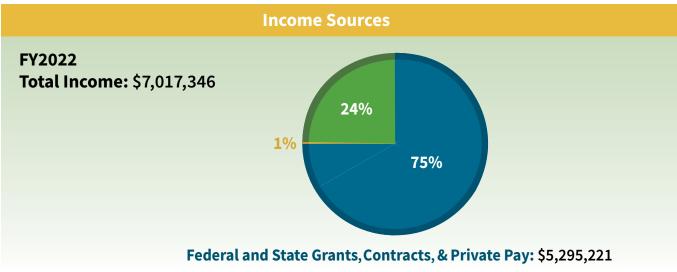
## "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."

-Coretta Scott King



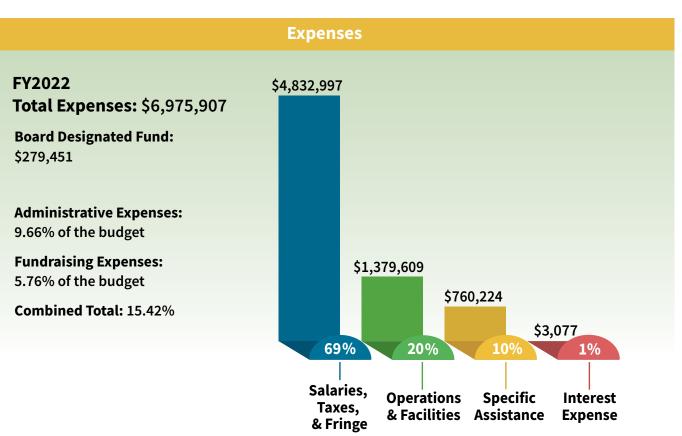
## The NUMBERS

Our Board of Directors is committed to maintaining a financially sustainable organization by creating an infrastructure that supports our clients, grows our core programs and service offerings, and develops our team of employees and volunteers. Of course, none of this would be possible without the generous support of our corporate and foundation partners and individual donors. Thanks to you, we are able to continue our mission of supporting northern Michigan's children, youth, adults and families in need.



**Development & Fundraising:** \$1,671,359

Miscellaneous Income: \$50,766



## What Your DOLLAR CAN DO

**\$2,500:** Provide 8-10 children with recreational therapy sessions

\$1,500: Provide a week's stay at Pete's Place Youth Shelter, plus counseling

and supportive services for two homeless youth

\$750: Provide 5 counseling sessions to a child struggling with life's challenges

such as grief and loss, anxiety, or depression

\$400: Provide 8 youth emergency supply backpacks

\$300: Provide 4 hours of supervised visitation for a family experiencing

domestic violence or high conflict

\$100: Provide toys and games for our family visitation and

therapy rooms

# Thank you to our kind and generous donors!

As we thoughtfully reflect on our values, including sustainability, we have decided to not print our donor names in this document but rather direct you to **www.cfsnwmi.org/supporters** to recognize the 1,300+ donors who supported us this past calendar year.



## connect with us

To learn more about Child and Family Services visit us at **cfsnwmi.org**, keep up with us on Facebook and Instagram, or call us at 231-946-8975.



Child & Family Services

of Northwestern Michigan



