In the tapestry of life, we’re all connected. Each one of us is a gift to those around us helping each other be who we are, weaving a perfect picture together.

~ Anita Moorjani

A tapestry is a fabric with multiple-colored threads woven into it to create texture, color and interconnected beauty. Like a tapestry, Children’s Bureau is a combination of programs, staff, provider-partners and various supporters all interconnected to create positive community impact.

In 2020, the strength of the CB’s tapestry was tested. The pandemic and immediate need to alter services tested the organization’s response time and nimbleness. Our staff were among the unsung heroes. They responded to hundreds of emails and calls from those who work in other interconnected systems that are critical threads in our overall impact. Rich threads of beauty and color were reflected in our staff’s abundant creativity that continued to shine during the most difficult of times. To each of them, I am forever grateful.

Our tapestry was also strengthened by new threads of support. Donors and funders worked through us to help those with the greatest needs. We witnessed amazing acts of generosity as our community came together to support the critical work that we do. Whether it was making masks when they were difficult to find or hanging televisions for kids in quarantine, these new threads strengthened our whole tapestry.

A new texture was added to our organizational tapestry as a result of the tragic events and subsequent protests calling for racial equity. We were called to hear the cry for help from those struggling with racial trauma as we witnessed touching moments that came from times of vulnerability and personal growth. This new texture will continue to enrich our organization with open discussions, personal growth opportunities and a renewed commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Finally, the very fabric of CB was forever changed when two governing boards defined a new organizational operating structure that would support the subsequent merger of Children’s Bureau and Families First. For this, I am grateful to each individual board member who proved invaluable to both organizations. We are deeply appreciative of your service.

A tapestry is a work of art. It is imperfect; most of the colors of thread start, change and stop in each row to ultimately create a beautiful picture. As 2020 closed out, it too could be described as one of starts, changes and stops.

We are deeply grateful to all the volunteers, donors, supporters and friends who were colorful threads of strength throughout 2020. We needed you and are so grateful for the way you cared for us, as we cared for others.
A NOTE FROM GINGER

This past year has looked unlike any other in our 185-year history. I am proud of the resiliency of the Families First staff and the continuity in service delivered to our clients. I am also hopeful about our ability to provide an even greater impact to our community in the future.

In December, we announced our intent to merge with Children’s Bureau. However, the process to explore strategic partnerships began in early 2019 to address current and anticipated challenges facing the human services sector. Families First’s Board of Directors worked with an external consultant to gain independent perspective for thorough exploration and planning.

The process that resulted in this merger included:

- Visioning sessions with staff and board
- Clarification of key factors for exploration of strategic partners
- Environmental scan of local and national organizations for partnership
- Comprehensive analysis of organizations that best met key factors
- Deep analysis of Children’s Bureau in the areas of staffing & economies of scale, continuum of service, contracts & revenue, impact of COVID-19, and racial equity efforts
- Exploration of options to remain independent compared to merging
- Integration planning

Ultimately, the Board decided that combining resources and expertise with Children’s Bureau offered a more holistic approach to child abuse prevention, family preservation and recovery services. The combined staff would be better able to coordinate and deliver services that considered the whole person—not just a set of concerns.

As we worked through the transition, I am impressed by and grateful for the dedication of the staff of both organizations who have put countless hours into ensuring that our clients experience no disruptions in service.

To all who have supported our organization, this is not the end of Families First’s rich history; it is yet another evolution, and one that I believe will provide a greater level of care for members of our community.

On behalf of the Board, thank you for your support and generosity during this extraordinary time.
A SHARED HISTORY

THROUGH THE CENTURIES

Children’s Bureau and Families First are two of Indiana’s most established nonprofits—with roots in the community that go back more than 185 years. Families First has been supporting and strengthening Indiana families since 1835, when it was founded as the Indianapolis Benevolent Society. And the Widows and Orphans Friends’ Society—founded in 1851 as an outreach of the very same Indianapolis Benevolent Society—would later give rise to Children’s Bureau.

THE INDIANAPOLIS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

On Thanksgiving Day, in 1835, a group of philanthropic citizens founded the Indianapolis Benevolent Society. Its mission was “to search out destitute families and afford them prompt relief.”

The Indianapolis Benevolent Society was the first family agency in the United States organized to meet the needs of individuals and families—no matter their race or religion—throughout the community. It provided food, clothing, and sometimes money to supplement the limited public funds for relief of families in poverty.

Prominent men such as Calvin Fletcher established the Indianapolis Benevolent Society. He and his wife Keziah volunteered by walking the city collecting donations. Source: Indiana Historical Society

After the Civil War, the Indianapolis Widows and Orphans Friends’ Society enlarged its facility as the number of orphans increased.
WIDOWS AND ORPHANS FRIENDS’ SOCIETY

Children’s Bureau has its roots in the Widows and Orphans Friends’ Society, founded in 1851 as an outreach of the Indianapolis Benevolent Society aimed at relieving “the physical, intellectual and moral wants of the widows and orphans of the city.”

“

Our lives are connected by threads. We weave our own stories, but there are so many threads that connect us to one another: invisible, strong, sparkling threads.

”

Homes for Black Children symbolized the shift of the Children’s Bureau at the end of the twentieth century toward community programming.

An unidentified employee and a child in the offices of the Children’s Bureau in 1953.

The Auxillary, a group of female volunteers, donated time and talents to help the orphans and raise money for the orphanage.

GROWTH AND CHANGE

In Indianapolis, as elsewhere in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, people wrestled with the theories of childhood development and the causes of poverty. Reformers attempted to differentiate between the worthy and unworthy. Ideas about the value of family life and institutional care were evolving. Increasing value was placed on the role the family, especially the mother, played in the development of the child. Children came to be valued less for their ability to work, and more for the love and joy they brought to a family.
TO THE PRESENT DAY

As the nature and focus of family assistance changed after World War II, the missions of human service organizations changed too.

The closure of the Children’s Bureau orphanage in 1941 marked its transition from a primarily public organization to a private one. Finding homes for children in need via adoption and foster care would become its mission—with expansion including group homes, transitional living and programming for children at risk.

Families First (then known as Family Welfare Society, and later Family Service Association of Indianapolis) shifted its focus away from relief and toward social work and counseling services aimed at strengthening families and community.

Today, both organizations embrace an inclusive idea of family that encompasses those connected by nurture and support, as well as biology. And both organizations have evolved to serve a diverse group of children and families.

Today, both organizations embrace an inclusive idea of family that encompasses those connected by nurture and support, as well as biology. And both organizations have evolved to serve a diverse group of children and families.

Where we serve people—and how—has changed, too. We meet people where they are—at their homes, and in their lives—with respect for self-determination and independence.

COMING TOGETHER AGAIN

In recent years, both Children’s Bureau and Families First increasingly coordinated services with other public and private organizations that provide social services in the community. Yet, as in the late 1800s, the evolution of a complex web of agencies has led to overlap in many areas.

Today, we are one organization. Combining our resources and expertise allows us to offer a more holistic approach to child abuse prevention, family preservation and recovery services. As a result of this change, we will have an even greater impact. And we’re excited to be one agency for Indiana families.
In May 2019, Families First embarked on a $1 million capital campaign to secure the purchase of the building at 2240 N. Meridian Street. Led by volunteers Bob and Pat Anker, the campaign goal was surpassed within fourteen months, totaling over $2.6 million.

Clients experience the impact of donor support for this campaign every day through professional, affordable, counseling and services with improved accessibility, convenience, security, and dignity.

**SPECIAL THANKS TO BILL AND ROBERTA WITCHGER FOR PROVIDING THE LEAD GIFT AND ENSURING OUR SUCCESS.**

**THANK YOU TO OUR INDIVIDUAL DONORS**

- Pat & Bob Anker
- Harris & Bernice Anthony
- Richard & Katherine Badertscher
- Rebecca Black
- Brad & Norma Boyd
- Shaun Clifford
- Steve & Lori Clyne
- Christine & Kevin Cook
- Coak Device Solutions
- Edward Smith & Kai Dabney-Smith
- Charles J. Dietzen
- Pat & Nancy Dillon
- Faegre Drinker Foundation
- Douglas & Heather Fick
- Carolyn Fox
- Shirley Fry
- Steven & Jennifer Gage
- Jerry & Lori Gallogly
- Mr. & Mrs. James Garrison
- Jerry L. Gray
- Walter C. Gross, Jr. & Janet M. Gross
- Michelle Gwaltney
- Grant & Gina Hays
- Steve & Debbie Hazelbaker
- Allen Hixon
- Kendall Hottell
- Todd Hufford
- Chris & Kelly Jacobs
- Tom & Kathy Jenkins
- Laura King
- Benjamin & Virginia Lippert
- Travis Lozier
- Penelope H. Lumley
- Nancy & Dave Mallon
- Mike & Jenn Martin
- Philip McGeath
- Jeffrey E. Merritt
- Midwest Presort Service
- Rose Milto
- Dave & Robin Miner
- Mutual of America
- New Direction Church
- Phyllis Newton
- Ralph G. Nowak
- Nicholas H. Noyes Jr. Memorial Foundation, Inc.
- Barbara A. Oberreich
- John & Tara Pearson
- Tom & Karen Peck
- Robert & Rose Popovich
- Prometheus Consulting
- Maureen & John Purcell
- R.E. Dimond and Associates, Inc.
- Sam & JoAn Reed
- Susan & Steve Ring
- Steve & Carol Risting
- Randall Rogers
- Mark & Katie Sattler
- Lucretia Scammahorn
- David & Denise Scheidler
- Alice & Robert Schloss
- Brian Senninger & Chris Tower
- Leona Shevitz
- David & Cathy Siler
- James Siler
- Loren & Morgan Snyder Family
- Mark E. & Amy L. Snyder Fund of the Johnson County Community Foundation
- Richard & Lucinda Sparks
- Bob & Cheryl Sparks
- Kris & Jeff Sue
- Joel & Victoria Swider
- The Clowes Fund
- Dierdre & Donald Thornton
- Amy Tobias
- Dals & Silas Tollever
- Linda & Jerry Toomer
- United Way of Central Indiana Capital Projects Fund
- Dr. & Mrs. E.D. Van Hove
- Nance & David Vondigut-Gabovitch
- Jane & Hugh Watson
- James P. White
- Mark Winzenread
- Bill & Roberta Witchger
- Chris & Monique York
- Mary Ann & Gene Zink

**IN HONOR OF FAMILIES FIRST’S 185TH ANNIVERSARY THE CLOWES FUND MATCHED GIFTS UP TO $50,000.**
At the onset of the pandemic, CB saw a 988% increase in prevention referrals in Marion County alone.

Referrals jumped 578% at FF.
The stressors brought on by the pandemic – job loss, isolation, schedule disruptions, working and learning from home – was tough for everyone, particularly those who struggle with depression, anger management, and substance use.

At the inception of the statewide closure, a need to completely pivot Families First’s in-person services model became apparent. In less than two weeks, FF moved to virtual/telehealth services. Unfortunately, not all of FF’s clients had access to internet, computers, or smart phones. Since these barriers made it difficult for clients to participate in telehealth services, FF continued to serve certain clients through in-person office hours and in-person community visits.

Through donor support, FF waived and reduced fees and provided financial assistance for basic needs like food, shelter, and access to healthcare.

The pandemic has not been forgiving to those who work in human services; face-to-face interaction cannot be replaced with technology.

In the beginning, Children’s Bureau was heavily focused on providing basic needs assistance and using digital means to ensure child safety. But with a rise in domestic violence incidents and referrals, we returned to in-person client visits in June. Case managers stayed on sidewalks or in yards to see the children and assess their safety. Staff contracting COVID-19 and requiring quarantine due to exposure was a significant challenge. One of our outstanding case managers, Reba Luken, lost her battle with COVID-19 in October. Staff were fatigued as they struggled to balance increased community need with their own personal responsibilities and safety.

At the onset of the pandemic, The Rachel Glick Courage Center was temporarily repurposed as Project Courage, providing temporary shelter for children displaced due to COVID-19.

Many of the children we serve in the shelters and foster care are behind academically. Emotional/behavioral challenges are common, but trying to educate these young people, in a group, was particularly challenging for staff. CB hired two educational coordinators and several tutors to assist the residential staff with facilitation of e-learning for multiple kids, in various grades, enrolled at different schools.

CB saw a significant increase in clients seeking assistance with housing, utilities and other basic needs.
Jessica is a single mom who requires frequent hospitalization. Grandma (Jessica's mom) is her go-to person for childcare during those times. But, sometimes Grandma's health hinders her ability to care for the little one. A prolonged hospitalization brought them to the children's shelter. A case manager listened, asked questions & assured Grandma that baby Gee was going to be safe and cared for in a loving environment. And she was! Baby Gee did not spend much time outside of loving arms. Children's Bureau is unique in that kids 0 to 17 stay without the presence of a guardian. Donors, like you, made this service possible.
A HOLISTIC APPROACH

PREVENTION
- Community Partners for Child Safety
- Functional Family Assessments
- Parenting Education
- Emergency Children’s Shelter

FAMILY PRESERVATION
- Alternatives to Family Violence
- Emergency Shelter Care For Children
- Father Engagement
- Foster Care & Adoption
- Home Based Case Work, Therapy & Visitation
- Older Youth Services

RECOVERY
- Domestic Violence Survivor Counseling
- Sexual Assault Counseling & Advocacy
- Substance Use Assessment & Treatment
COLLECTIVE IMPACT

CHILDREN’S BUREAU SERVED 41,681 CHILDREN IN OVER 20,191 FAMILIES

- 97% of the families served lived at or below poverty level.

- 75% of those served lived at or below poverty level.

- Hispanic 25%
- Other 6%
- Black 29%
- White 40%

FAMILIES FIRST SERVED 30,180 PEOPLE

- 75% of those served lived at or below poverty level.

- Other 6%
- Black 29%
- White 55%
- Hispanic 25%

* Poverty level for a family of 4 is an income of less than $26,500 a year.

VOLUNTEERS

CHILDREN’S BUREAU

- 195 Unique Volunteers
- 1,387.25 Hours
- $35,277.76 Value

FAMILIES FIRST

- 55 Unique Volunteers
- 3,936.5 Hours
- $171,395.21 Value

Volunteers read virtually to the residents in the shelters
Volunteers participated in parades to boost shelter morale
Volunteers landscaped the Children’s Shelter playground
A young professional colored with a shelter resident

* Poverty level for a family of 4 is an income of less than $26,500 a year.
YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ADVISORY BOARD & EMERGING LEADERS COUNCIL

Courtney Brookins
Greg Buck
Marlene Burton
Ryan Callahan
Marie Cameron
Olivia Cloer
Glenn Coapstick
Kristina Coleman
Jessica De La Cruz
Zach DeLoach
Kenny Eitzroth
Eric Golubic
Caroline Hall
Elizabeth Harlow
Sarah Johnson
Jasmine Kenner
Jenna Klein
Ashley Larson
Brittany Ocubillo
Erin Martz
Mary McDermott
Stevie McElheny
Kayla Nymeyer
Aaron Parker
Olivia Roney
Caitlin Scanlon
Connor Schmok
Emily Schroeder
Megan Scott
Caitlin Smarrelli
Jessica Steinacher
Megan Stoner
Brett Tanaka
Yvette Tran
Ellie Voith
Kaitlin Voller
Quentessa Williams

Young leaders provide us the skills and passion necessary to create a new social fabric of diversity in our community.

CHILDREN'S BUREAU BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers of the Board of Directors

Joe Breen, Chair
Dr. Ramarao Yeleti, Vice Chair
Tony Bonacuse, Secretary
Michele Kawiecki, Treasurer

Directors

Steve Abdalla
Michael T. Baker
Deborah Balogh
Marc Caito
Gordon L. Castetter, Jr.
Cody E. Coppotelli
Ann Frick, Honorary Lifetime
Jenny Froehle
Lisa Gomperts
Richard Hayes
Carrie Henderson
Carrie Houston
Rona Howenstine
John Huesing
Destinee Jordan
Troy Kafka
Dr. Gloria King

Ryan Lobsiger
B.J. Maley, Honorary Lifetime
Matt Nelson
Chris Phillips
Kevin Poad
Carol Pulis
Blake J. Schulz
Megan E. Scott, YPAB
Robin Shaw
Nick Shelton
Prentice C. Stovall, Jr.
Katy Stowers

FAMILIES FIRST BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers of the Board of Directors

Ginger Lippert, Chair
Doug Fick, Secretary
Teresa Hutchison, Treasurer
Ryan Hendrickson, Treasurer
Nancy Dillon, Vice Chair
Doris Tolliver, Vice Chair
Nick Alford
Bernice Anthony
Kayla Ernst
Roni Ford
Phyllis Garrison
Mike Martin
Kenneth Sullivan
Dierdre Thornton

Directors

Deans

Brad Boyd
Tom Peck
Jane Watson
Mark L. Winzenread
Chris York
CORPORATE PARTNERS

We’re proud to partner with companies that believe providing kids and families a chance to succeed is the precursor to a stronger community. Employees of our Corporate Partner companies attend special events, volunteer, and personally donate.

Ambassador $20,000

Leader $15,000

Champion $10,000

Educator $7,500

Mentor $5,000

Supporter $2,500
REVENUES & EXPENSES

CHILDREN'S BUREAU

Revenue Total $29,448,046

- Contributions & Special Events $809,339 2.75%
- In-Kind Donations $395,623 1.34%
- Non-Government Grants $535,305 1.82%
- Government Contracts, Grants & Service Fees $26,655,036 90.52%
- Other Income (includes investments) $499,932 1.70%
- United Ways $552,811 1.88%

Expenses Total $30,080,972

- Programs & Services $25,659,362 85.30%
- Management & General $3,478,030 11.56%
- In-Kind Donations $395,623 1.32%
- Development/Fundraising $547,957 1.82%

Net Surplus / (Loss): ($632,926)

FAMILIES FIRST

Revenue Total $5,292,006

- Contributions & Special Events $888,745 16.79%
- In-Kind Donations - 0.00%
- Non-Government Grants $790,975 14.95%
- Government Contracts, Grants & Service Fees $3,253,086 61.47%
- Other Income (includes investments) $193,665 3.66%
- United Way $165,535 3.13%

Expenses Total $6,458,414

- Programs & Services $5,367,208 83.10%
- Management & General $757,191 11.72%
- In-Kind Donations - 0.00%
- Development/Fundraising $334,015 5.17%

Net Surplus / (Loss): ($1,166,408)