



**I AM STRONG**  
Building Resiliency to Promote Change

May 13, 2015

Dear Central Ohio Community,

When you hear the word "trauma," what comes to mind? Trauma can take many forms. But one thing is certain: trauma of any kind can have a powerful and lasting effect on children.

When trauma happens early in life and is left untreated, the negative impact can affect a child's ability to learn and focus in school as well as their emotional and behavioral growth and development. At Directions for Youth & Families, our staff sees daily the damage trauma can cause in the families of our community.

DFYF is uniquely equipped to help young people in our community learn to address the results of trauma and to help them develop coping skills to deal with future trauma. Our entire counseling team recently spent several days in training to identify and deal with the effects of trauma on their clients. Every day the DFYF counselors work with kids to build resiliency that helps them appropriately address life's challenges -- including trauma -- where they live, at school and in their neighborhoods.

Directions for Youth & Families is one of central Ohio's oldest and largest mental and behavioral health organizations serving young people and their families for more than 115 years. We believe that every child has value and potential, and we work to help our community's young people have the best futures possible.

In 2014, we touched the lives of more than 7,200 young people and families in Franklin and Delaware counties. The kids in our programs learn the importance of staying in school and the values of responsibility, respect, self-reliance, tolerance, abstinence and how to make good choices.

We hope our 2015 State of the Child annual report provides you with insight to the work we do every day in central Ohio thanks to the support of neighbors and friends like you. It highlights the actual situations of a few kids and families we served in the past year.\*

With the ongoing commitment, support and collaboration of organizations, businesses, government and individuals throughout central Ohio, we will continue our mission of touching the lives of young people and families in remarkable ways.

Sincerely,



Allan J. Dinsmore  
Chair  
Directions for Youth & Families  
Operating Board



Duane Casares  
Chief Executive Officer

\* Client names have been changed to protect their confidentiality.

## How DFYF Programs Helped Families in 2014

**78%**

of participants in the Positive Paths Parenting program increased their knowledge of parenting skills by the end of services.

**100%**

of youth attending the Ohio Avenue Youth Center avoided contact with Juvenile Court.

**100%**

of participants in the Life Skills middle school drug and alcohol prevention program who completed the program reported abstaining from alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs for a consecutive 90-day period.

**93%**

of youth who completed the School Connections program improved their school performance.

**92%**

of the 1,611 youth completing the My Best Self program to encourage abstinence or delayed sexual activity showed improvement in their ability to make responsible, informed decisions about relationships, comparing pre-test to post-test.

**863**

Columbus City School students received a mental health assessment.

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**90%**

of the 1,780 youth completing services in the Outreach Counseling Program avoided contact with Juvenile Court for one year following the end of services.

**85%**

of the 559 clients in Behavioral Healthcare displayed an improvement in functioning by the end of services.

**92%**

of families in the Ready, Set, Grow kindergarten readiness program improved their home environment for their children's readiness to learn.

**98%**

of clients in the PROMISES program demonstrated improvement in their personal goals, decreasing the negative effects of sexual abuse.

**97%**

of clients in the Anger Management Options program displayed an improvement in functioning by the end of services.

**85%**

of clients in the Children Who Witness Violence program were better able to cope with their experience at the end of services.

# Jacqui

After being charged with child endangerment of her six-year-old son, Jacqui was referred to DFYF through the court system.

The charges resulted from an incident in which the young, 24-year-old mother struck the boy with a “switch” leaving marks on the back side of his body and his legs.

As she participated in the Positive Paths Parenting program at DFYF, she revealed that she had been punished as a child with switches, belts, shoes and other items by her mother, and that she therefore saw nothing wrong with her own actions toward her son. Jacqui shared that she did not like being hit by her mother and that she felt angry toward her mother for not allowing her to tell her side of the story.

In class discussions about communication, Jacqui learned the importance of letting children have a voice as well as some methods of communicating with children. She expressed that because her child is a boy, she looked at him differently, since she was raised that boys were not supposed to cry or express their feelings. The class discussions helped Jacqui learn the importance of allowing males to express emotions.

Jacqui said that, when she started the parenting classes at DFYF, she had a negative attitude and believed that no one should be able to tell her how to raise her child. As the class concluded, she shared that she has learned to change the generational ways of raising children in her family and to be a more supportive, caring, listening and positive parent who provides a nurturing, loving environment without corporal punishment.

*Positive Paths Parenting* offers instruction to parents to improve the quality of family life.



# Tyrell

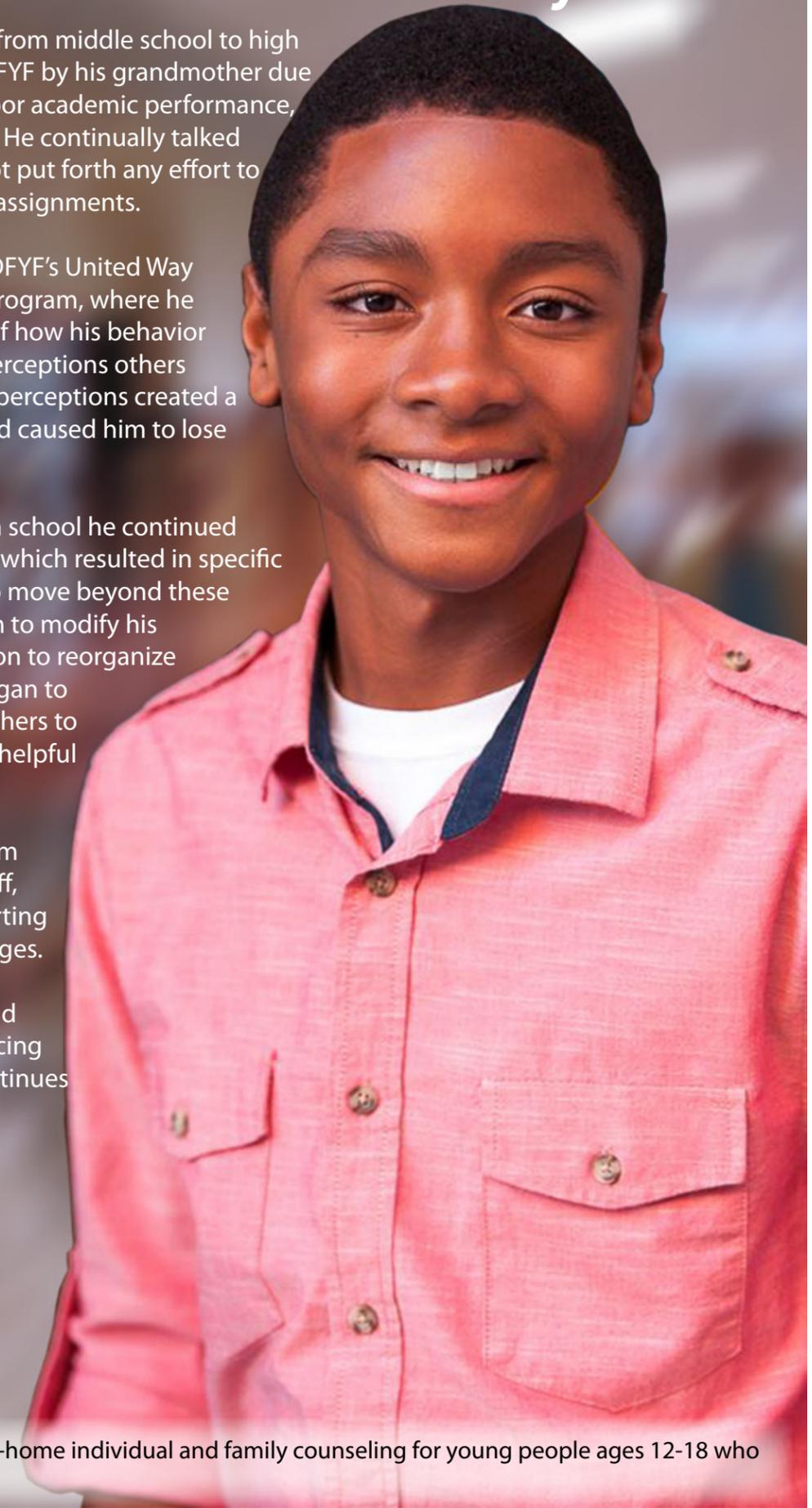
Shortly before he transitioned from middle school to high school, Tyrell was referred to DFYF by his grandmother due to his disrespectful attitude, poor academic performance, and fights with other students. He continually talked back to his teachers and did not put forth any effort to learn in class or on homework assignments.

He began with a counselor in DFYF’s United Way Building Bright Futures (BBF) program, where he developed an understanding of how his behavior in the classroom shaped the perceptions others had of him. He saw how these perceptions created a negative reputation for him and caused him to lose support from the school staff.

At first, as he moved on to high school he continued some of his negative behavior, which resulted in specific consequences. Tyrell’s desire to move beyond these consequences encouraged him to modify his behavior. He took positive action to reorganize his school assignments and began to positively interact with his teachers to develop non-antagonistic and helpful relationships with them.

Tyrell’s grandmother helped him by working with the school staff, identifying barriers and supporting him in his efforts to make changes. He has greatly improved his attitude toward his teachers and other students and is experiencing success in his studies as he continues services to support his positive changes.

**Building Bright Futures** provides in-home individual and family counseling for young people ages 12-18 who are at risk of school failure.



# Elijah

Three years ago, Elijah was a shy, awkward freshman who encountered the My Best Self curriculum taught by a DFYF worker as supplemental education in a high school health class. He appeared very interested in the classes and thanked the worker at the conclusion of the series, saying he learned more in her classes than he had ever known about the topic.

During Fall Semester, 2014, the worker returned to the same school and was greeted by a tall, smiling young man who explained that he had been in her group sessions for My Best Self three years earlier.

Elijah shared that the information he gained from the program was some of the most important of his high school career to date and had made him realize that his decisions about sexual health and activity were critical to his ability to become the man he wants to be.

As a result of the information he learned in the sessions, he decided it was best for him to wait and focus on his academic and athletic goals.

The *My Best Self* program at DFYF motivates young people to abstain from or to delay sexual activity and to make more responsible, informed decisions about relationships and their sexual health.

# Lucas

Lucas entered the DFYF after school prevention and education program when he was a 10-year-old sixth grader. Lucas lives with his mom, a single parent, and despite a challenging upbringing in a low income household with no positive male role models, he has worked very hard to maintain positive values taught by his mother.

Lucas has always loved music and took advantage of the instrumental music program offered in the DFYF after school program to improve his strong keyboarding skills. He joined the after school program band and expanded his instrumental talents to include drums and electric and bass guitars.

During his years in the DFYF after school program, Lucas evolved to be a leader at the youth center, advocating against the use of alcohol and other substances and functioning as someone other youth look up to and turn to for advice.

Today, Lucas is a 10th grader at Fort Hayes High School, continues working to overcome some learning disabilities and maintains a 3.0 GPA. He shared that his experience in the DFYF after school program makes him "feel at home" and has allowed him to grow as a person while expanding his creative abilities.

The after school prevention and education programs offered by Directions for Youth & Families provide young people ages 7-17 an opportunity to participate in programs emphasizing abstinence from substance use and delinquent behavior while focusing on staying in school. The DFYF after school youth centers provide homework help, leadership development, nutrition education and computer training as well as opportunities to participate in vocal and instrumental music, visual arts, recreation and dance.

# Facts about Trauma and Resiliency

A significant number of children in American society are exposed to traumatic life events. A traumatic event is one that threatens injury, death, or the physical integrity of self or others and also causes horror, terror, or helplessness at the time it occurs.



Estimates of trauma exposure rates and subsequent psychological impacts among children and youth vary depending on the type of sample, type of measure, informant source and other factors.

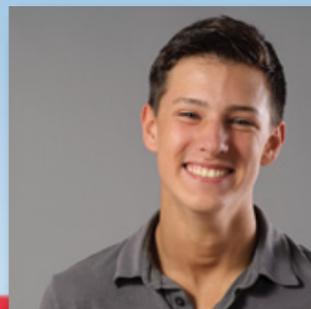


Better life outcomes could be achieved by decreasing the number and severity of adverse early experiences and by strengthening the relationships that protect young children from the harmful effects of toxic stress. (*Alberta Family Wellness Initiative*)

A resiliency-orientated mental health system stands with youth and families and fights stigma and stereotypes through comprehensive mental health education that transforms the community. All child serving systems make a commitment to provide safe and non-traumatizing care with all children and families, and above all else do no harm. A resiliency-oriented mental health system is sensitive to the culture, values, and situation of every person, treating each with dignity and respect regardless of the person's life circumstances. Providers advocate for the rights of all youth and families and are proactive in facilitating and developing meaningful accommodations so that the youth can achieve success in all environments.

With the right supports, encouragement, and active facilitation, youth with emotional or behavioral challenges can achieve their full potential.

Richard Shepler, Ph.D., PCC-S  
Case Western Reserve University

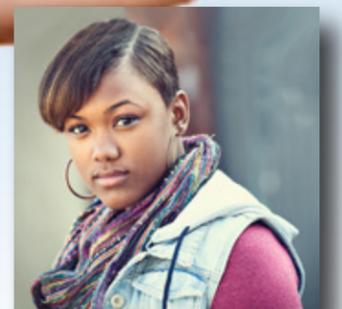


There is a substantial and growing body of research on how stress and adversity experienced in childhood affect the health and well-being of children, their brains and neural connections, and their lifetime outcomes. While adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) have been defined in numerous ways, there is general agreement that they lead to a wide range of lasting negative effects on cognitive and developmental functioning as well as physical, social and emotional well-being.  
Dr. Roy Wade

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Traumatic events include sexual abuse, physical abuse, domestic violence, community and school violence, medical trauma, motor vehicle accidents, acts of terrorism, war experiences, natural and human-made disasters, suicides and other traumatic losses.



The development of a person's brain architecture is influenced by the degree and kind of stress experienced in childhood. Neglect or abuse causes toxic stress, which can lead to negative health outcomes in adulthood. Encouraging nurturing relationships to protect children from toxic stress pays dividends for the health of the future adult as well as for the community as a whole.



For additional information about trauma and resiliency, visit the following websites:

<http://acestudy.org/>  
<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>  
<http://www.traumacenter.org>  
<http://begun.case.edu/cip>

# Antonio

I was always a pretty good student, and I figured that drugs wouldn't make a difference in my grades – after all, I'm smart, right?

I had smoked pot before, but my parents got me away from it. Plus I had been in the Outreach Counseling Program at DFYF when I was younger, and that helped me a lot. But as I got older, I was hanging with some kids who smoked all the time, so I got back into using pot– at first a little and then everyday. I was 17 by this time, and I thought I could handle it.

My dad really got to be annoying all of a sudden, and I started having lots of arguments with him. Sometimes I'd get mad when he would bring up that my grades were dropping.

My parents were really getting worried about me and my behavior. They confronted me about smoking pot again. They said I had to get help, so I asked if I could go back to DFYF. This time I was in a special program specifically for drug abuse counseling.

I learned to understand the change in me when I was using marijuana and the consequences of my behavior. I got off pot, and my grades improved a lot. In fact, my high school recognized me for my improvement, and I am participating in extra-curricular activities that I wasn't part of before.

I got a part-time job to help with expenses at home and I changed the crowd I hang with. The best part is that I have a much better relationship with both of my parents now, and I'm working on making good choices to achieve my goals. I'll be graduating in the spring, and I'm substance-free!

**Family Outreach Substance Abuse Counseling (FOSAC)** provides home-based services to Franklin County young people ages 12-18 with a history of substance abuse, delinquent behavior and home and school problems.



# Thomas

Thomas, who is just four-years-old, and his family moved to the United States from Nepal two years ago. His parents wanted him to have a smooth transition to kindergarten when the time comes, so they entered him in the Ready Set Grow program at DFYF.

After just three months in the program, Thomas was able to identify all the letters of the English alphabet and the sound each letter makes. He has worked hard on learning English and how to count.

His parents are very involved in the learning process and usually sit in the sessions with the DFYF staff. After the sessions, the worker discusses learning strategies with Thomas' parents.

In addition to supporting Thomas' learning process, the Ready Set Grow program provides his family with parenting information and community resources to help them nurture and encourage him in school.



**Ready Set Grow** is an in-home kindergarten readiness program that provides case management, parent education and theme-based curricula to multi-need families with children ages 2-6. Staff work with both children and parents.

# Camaya

I was really upset when my mom, who adopted me, referred me to the Outreach Counseling program at DFYF. She said I had a bad attitude and my anger was inappropriate.

Honestly, I was mad at everybody, especially my family with my mom, her own two kids, her niece and two other adopted kids from other families. I didn't like all the rules we had to follow. One time I got so angry that the neighbors called the police because I was threatening everyone.

I didn't like all the rules at school either, so I would deliberately show up late and talk back to my teachers. I got suspended a bunch of times, and my grades got so bad that it looked like I would fail school this year.

I'm 15, and I just didn't see what the big deal is about all these rules everyone wanted me to follow everywhere I went. So, I was angry.

The DFYF worker came to the house and worked with me and my mother to develop a plan to help me deal with my anger, learn about making positive decisions, help me follow rules and express emotions in positive ways, and be respectful to people in authority – like my mom and teachers.

I met with the worker every week, and we worked on all these goals. All of a sudden, things started to get better. I was on time for school, and I stopped getting suspended. My grades improved and I even made the honor roll!

After a few months, my mom started counseling sessions with me and the worker. We worked on communication skills, expectations and home rules and building positive relationships. I have gotten much better about following the rules and respecting others.

I'm working hard in school, making friends and things are going really well at home. I even help with housework without being asked!

The **Outreach Counseling Program** provides in-home individual and family counseling, as well as crisis intervention services for youth ages 5-17 and their families.

# Michael

Michael attends the after school prevention program at DFYF, where young people learn to make good choices and have positive alternatives to delinquent behavior in the after school hours when many youth are unsupervised.

He is nine-years-old and is in the Healthy Leaders group for young people with unique behavioral challenges. When the DFYF staff first encountered Michael, he was not interested in group activities. He would frequently hide in a corner and cover his face with his hood. He would not answer when spoken to and instead would defiantly ignore the workers.

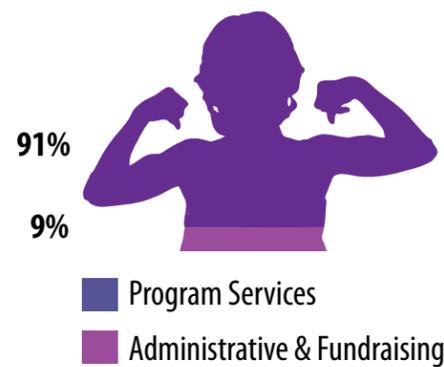
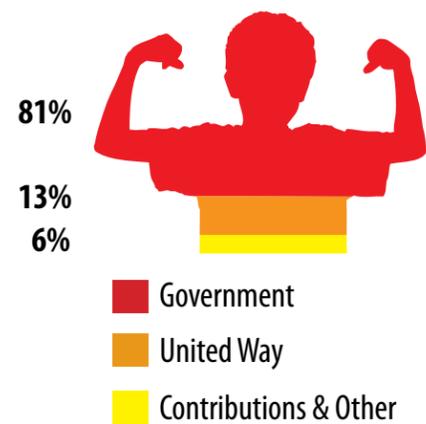
The staff gradually began to engage Michael, giving him occasional opportunities to participate in a variety of activities. His attitude began to improve, and became apparent that he has a great sense of humor.

Michael now is much more comfortable at the youth center and the group setting. He listens and makes eye contact and is becoming more trusting of the center staff. He is letting his "guard" down, participating in the group activities and generally having a good time!

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**Statement of Operating Revenue for Fiscal Year 2014**

Revenue		Expenses	
Government	\$6,281,676	Program Services	\$7,008,312
United Way	1,027,437	Administrative & Fund-raising	678,918
Contributions & Other	495,841		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,767,182</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,687,230</b>



**Clients Served – January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014**

Clients served: Total clients (unduplicated):	6,247
Number served in counseling and clinical programs:	4,798
Number served in prevention, education and after school programs:	2,181
Number served in parenting and early childhood programs:	482



**Support Our Work to Help Kids and Families in Central Ohio**

Your support is critical to the work we do to help young people and families build pathways to positive futures. Please consider making a donation to Directions for Youth & Families today by visiting our website, [www.dfyf.org](http://www.dfyf.org) or sending your gift to:

Development Office  
Directions for Youth & Families  
1515 Indianola Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43215

Thank you for all you do to build strong, resilient kids and families in central Ohio!

Please share this report with a friend.

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The stories told in this document are based on actual events that occurred in the lives of clients of Directions for Youth & Families. The identities have been altered to protect the children and their families.

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