

# Directions

for Youth & Families



State of the Child in Central Ohio 2017



TOGETHER:



we learn

TOGETHER:



we overcome

TOGETHER:



we give back

TOGETHER:



we make beautiful music

Changing lives. Changing communities.



May 3, 2017



Dear Central Ohio Community,

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 117 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 2016, we touched the lives of more than 8,000 young people and families in Central Ohio. 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 2017 State of the Child annual report provides you with insight about 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.

Duane Casares, LISW-S  
CEO



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## Today's youth face many challenges:

School Concerns

Mental Health Issues

Sexual Abuse

Physical Abuse/Neglect

Delinquency

Family Conflict

Domestic Violence

Substance Abuse

At Directions for Youth & Families (DFYF), we collaborate with area schools, hospitals, judicial systems, protective services, other social service agencies, and parents to provide outreach mental and behavioral health services. DFYF serves over 8,000 youth and their families each year.

Through counseling, education, and support, DFYF builds and inspires hope, healing, and resilience.

## What sets Directions for Youth & Families apart?

- We provide services to youth on an outreach basis - in their homes, schools and other community settings *removing transportation barriers and allowing us to work with the entire family in their environment.*
- Over 95% of our services are provided at no cost to the client *allowing those who would not be able to afford it to receive the services they need.*
- Cutting edge treatment and training *piloting a youth ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) assessment tool for a new movement using brain science to disrupt cycles of violence, addiction and disease.*
- We are a resiliency-oriented, trauma-informed agency working and training with experts and educators from The Trauma Center at JRI out of Boston, Philadelphia Children's Hospital, and Case Western Reserve University.



TOGETHER: WE GROW



## OUTREACH COUNSELING PROGRAM

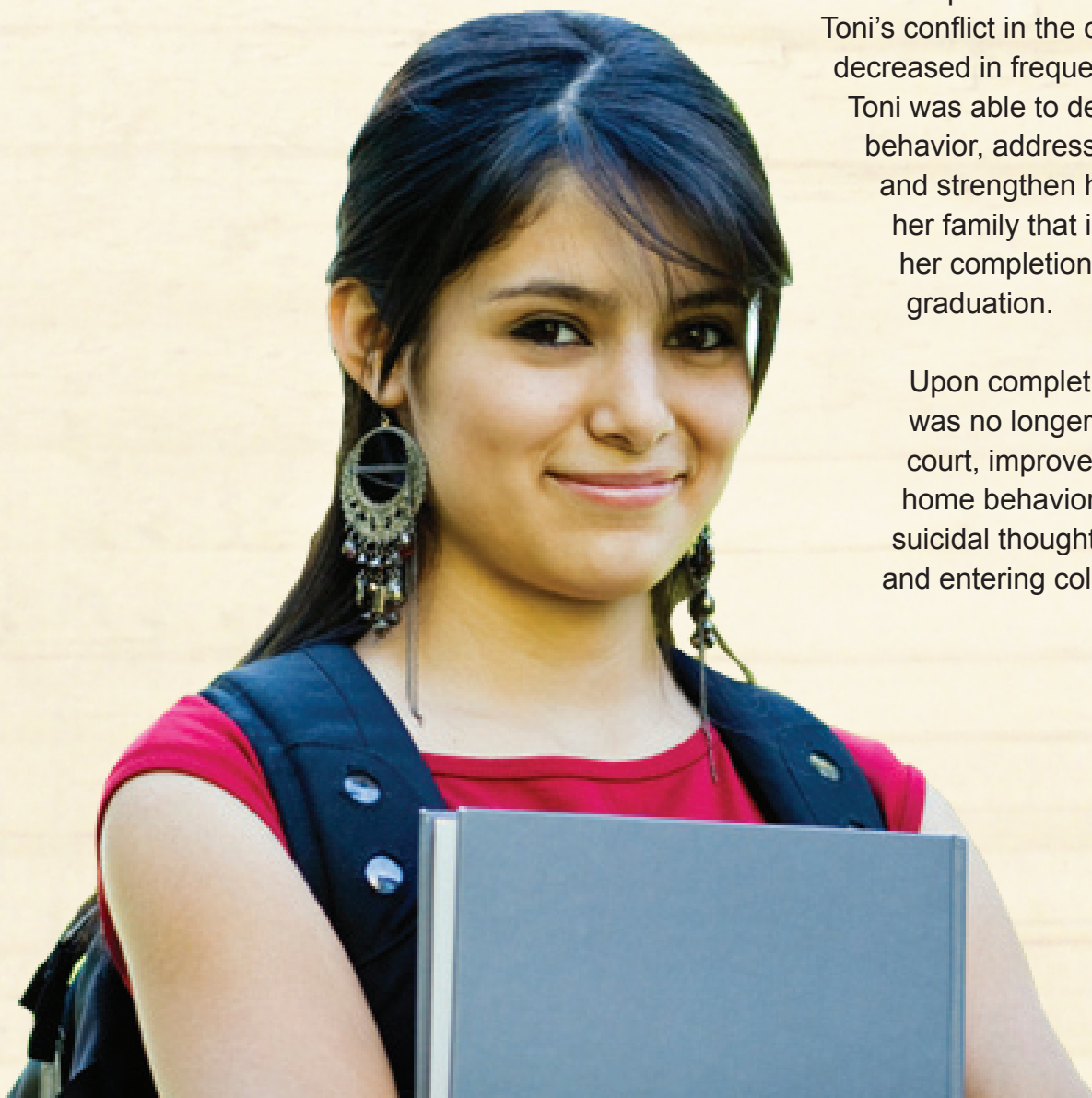
*bringing services to the clients  
in client's homes, schools, & other community settings*

Toni, 18, was referred to services by her high school counselor. She had extreme anger issues, including physical and verbal altercations with peers and adults. Upon completion of an intake referral, it was discovered that she had a chronic history of suspensions, poor school behavior, assaults and domestic violence charges; certainly behaviors that were symptomatic of some serious traumatic experiences. The diagnostic assessment revealed a history of being sexually abused and suicide attempts.

Toni and her counselor met weekly in a combination of home and school visits. Additionally they had weekly family counseling sessions to address her treatment goals. Through collaboration with school staff and the courts, Toni was involved in the treatment process for one year. During services, further evaluation determined she had ADHD, depression and anxiety. Through medication management and the development of effective coping strategies, self-regulation skills and positive communication skills, Toni's conflict in the community and home decreased in frequency and intensity.

Toni was able to decrease her negative behavior, address past abuse issues, and strengthen her relationship with her family that in combination led to her completion of high school and graduation.

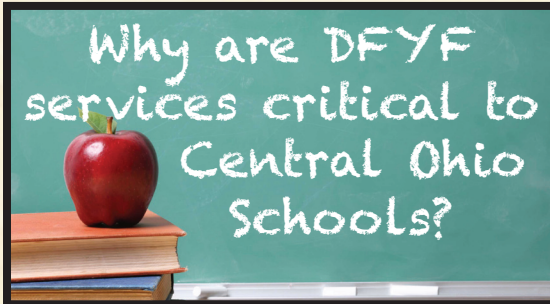
Upon completion of services, Toni was no longer involved with the court, improved community and home behaviors, had eliminated suicidal thoughts and was enrolled and entering college.





# SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

## *partnerships with schools: services to students and support to school administrators*



### SCHOOL COUNSELOR:

From my perspective, DFYF services are ABSOLUTELY necessary for our school. There is NO WAY I would be able to touch all the different parts of my job if I did not have DFYF. I think that our DFYF counselor is essential for our building and that we absolutely work as a team.

- Erin Harris, Finland Middle School

### 6th GRADE MATH & SCIENCE TEACHER:

Many of our kids don't have the support at home. They live in broken homes, money is tight, parents are working. It is good to have adults who support our students at school and believe in them.

- Devon Lewis, Franklin Woods Intermediate

### DFYF LICENSED SOCIAL WORKER:

Our school-based services support the school staff principals, teachers, and guidance counselors who often are not able to meet the social and emotional needs of their students. As school-based counselors, we are able to give the students one-on-one attention that they often need. We also work more closely with the students' families in ways that the school staff are not able, therefore creating a bridge between home and school. This connection often leads to a better understanding of an individual student's challenges and more support for that student in need.

### PRINCIPAL:

DFYF is important to our school because it provides us a bridge between school and community. Many times, we do not have the services that a family or individual needs. DFYF presents itself as a non-threatening entity. DFYF is able to provide the services outside of the school to help our students and their families.

We have had multiple cases where DFYF staff have been able to provide counseling services that involves not just the student, but the family. In doing so, the student has a support system both at school and with the parents: counseling services and evaluations have been extremely helpful in getting proper medication and care.

- Tresa Davis, Norton Middle School

### ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL:

We have no staff at our level to provide the services that DFYF provides. We have many students with counseling needs that our families cannot provide. DFYF provides for our student's mental health which is necessary for their academic growth.

I have suggested DFYF services to many of our families. As an assistant principal, I do not feel equipped to discuss/guide some of our students with the problems they are having. For instance the number of 11 year old girls that are threatening suicide and/or cutting. DFYF is teaching them more appropriate coping skills and also trying to stop the behavior as an attention seeking device.

- Carol Merritt, Franklin Woods Intermediate





# BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURES - RECLAIM

## *partnership with Franklin County Juvenile Court*

Sixteen year old Alex had no respect for authority, wasn't attending school regularly and was expelled for being one of the instigators of a riot next door to the school.

### **STEP BACK 3 MONTHS**

Alex was devastated when his step mom died of cancer. Soon after that he started picking up misdemeanor charges. Meanwhile, his dad spiraled into depression and Alex lost that relationship too.

### **ENTER DFYF**

Lamarr has worked with troubled youth from the judicial court system for more than 12 years with DFYF. The first sessions were difficult. Alex was closed and resistant. Lamarr began to build trust through the repetition of meetings, building rapport, and finding likes, interests and strengths. Then came another setback - Alex's cousin, who he was close to and was 3 years older than him, died of cancer. He now had to deal with the grief and loss of two family members.

Lamarr met Alex at the library (where he attended virtual school), at Alex's home and other locations in the community. They worked on decision making, coping skills, self regulation, anger management, and processing his emotions of grief and loss.

### **A MISSTEP**

Alex, on an ankle monitor, was caught riding in a stolen car and breaking into a house. This resulted in police guns drawn on him and a burglary charge. For the next two months Lamarr held their sessions at the juvenile detention center where Alex was living; Lamarr also accompanied him to his weekly probation appointments and court appearances.

### **THE PROMISE**

Alex wasn't showing a whole lot of emotions other than anger until he broke down in juvenile jail. He started crying, telling Lamarr, "I made someone a promise and I can't complete the promise". It was to his cousin who had died; she wanted him to graduate and to get off probation. Lamarr and Alex kept meeting, talking about alternatives and taking small steps so Alex could fulfill his promise. His parole officer saw progress and advocated for Alex to continue receiving DFYF services and working with Lamarr. Alex was eventually sent home on an ankle monitor.

### **THE JOURNAL**

Lamarr gave Alex a journal so he could start writing down his feelings. He'd write letters and rap about what he would say if his cousin was there; things like the anger he had toward his dad and his detachment from Alex. He continued attending library school during the summer and enrolled back in a public school system in August. After meeting with Alex, the school principal told

Lamarr, "This is not the same Alex we had last year." By the time he closed out of DFYF services, Alex was holding down a part time job, had completed probation, was doing well in school, set to graduate in June and confident he would be fulfilling the promise.





# HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES for YOUTH

## *substance use counseling*

### *utilizes individual and group therapy*

Rachelle was a senior in high school living with severe depression, contemplating suicide, and coping by smoking marijuana five or more times a day. She had feelings of hopelessness, poor self-esteem, negative thoughts, and issues with her father.

After hospitalization for attempted suicide, Rachelle was linked with DFYF's Healthy Alternatives for Youth (HAY) program. She engaged in both individual and group therapy.



Weekly counseling sessions were either at school or her home. At first her DFYF counselor could not get her to talk - Rachelle just wanted to sleep through her first session. The second session her counselor brought colored pencils and a floral art coloring book. Rachelle loved this; it woke her up and gave her a focus - she talked while she colored and began looking forward to each of her sessions. They were able to address and work through a medication adjustment for her depression.

Rachelle found great support in the group sessions as well. She became a leader, challenging other kids, and was a vocal supporter. Group counseling is an opportunity to meet with peers who are struggling with similar issues. It is a 10 week session with two facilitators bringing up topics for open, therapeutic, client-driven discussion. The first hour is an educational topic, such as stages (process) of change or triggers for relapse, effects of drugs on the body, or values/beliefs compared to how they are acting. The second hour is an activity, like shopping and making dinner, walking, painting, or things to do free, instead of getting high. Group counseling takes the process to a different level and builds therapeutic, trusting bonds that supports the individual counseling.

Through her time with the HAY program Rachelle had several ups and downs, but with hard work she began to make small changes in her life allowing her to thrive. She increased her ability to focus, regulate her moods, improve responsible decision making, and accept the relationship with her father. She improved her academics, made new friends, stopped using drugs (her main focus), and gained more confidence in herself.

She continues to use the tools she learned through the HAY program to live a happy, positive, drug free life. She will be the first to tell you she feels worthy of this and can achieve her goals.





# PROMISES

## *outreach counseling for survivors of sexual abuse*

The story of Elliott, a fourth grade boy - *as told by his DFYF licensed social worker*

I arrived to a home that was not Elliot's. During the introductions of our first meeting, Elliot and his aunt shared that they were living in a friend's home temporarily, and his father visited once per week.



For the next year I followed Elliott as he transitioned from one primary caretaker to another, from one home to another home, and one hotel to another. I sat on the edge of each hotel room bed, overwhelmed by the smell of urine stained clothes, as I worked to encourage and support Elliott and his family towards hope. I transported him to places such as the library for a brief escape from his current reality while we learned new tools to deal with his experiences.

We worked together week after week. The entire family made significant strides when this now fifth grader ended his counseling.

- I uncovered that his grandmother, who was currently very ill and also living within the family unit, had experienced violence from her husband.
- I learned that Elliott's father, and his brothers, had started abusing substances during high school as a means to cope with the violence they experienced in their home. Their mother acknowledged and began to work through her regrets of how she parented her family.
- Elliott's aunt explored how her unresolved grief complicated her own emotional presence in the family and impacted her approach in co-parenting with her brother and mother.
- I observed as his dad became more assured of his worth as a father and diligently worked to save his family by not falling back into addiction as he faced the stress of homelessness and poverty.
- I collaborated with both Elliott's teacher, to help her better understand and respond to his behavior, and with the Children's Services caseworker to monitor the implementation of our extensive safety planning.

Throughout treatment Elliott:

- continued in his gifted classroom
- decreased his stealing, lying, arguing, and his anger outbursts in both their intensity and frequency
- eliminated his self-harm (pulling his hair out and banging his head against walls) and sexually reactive behaviors
- gained some **acceptance and hope**



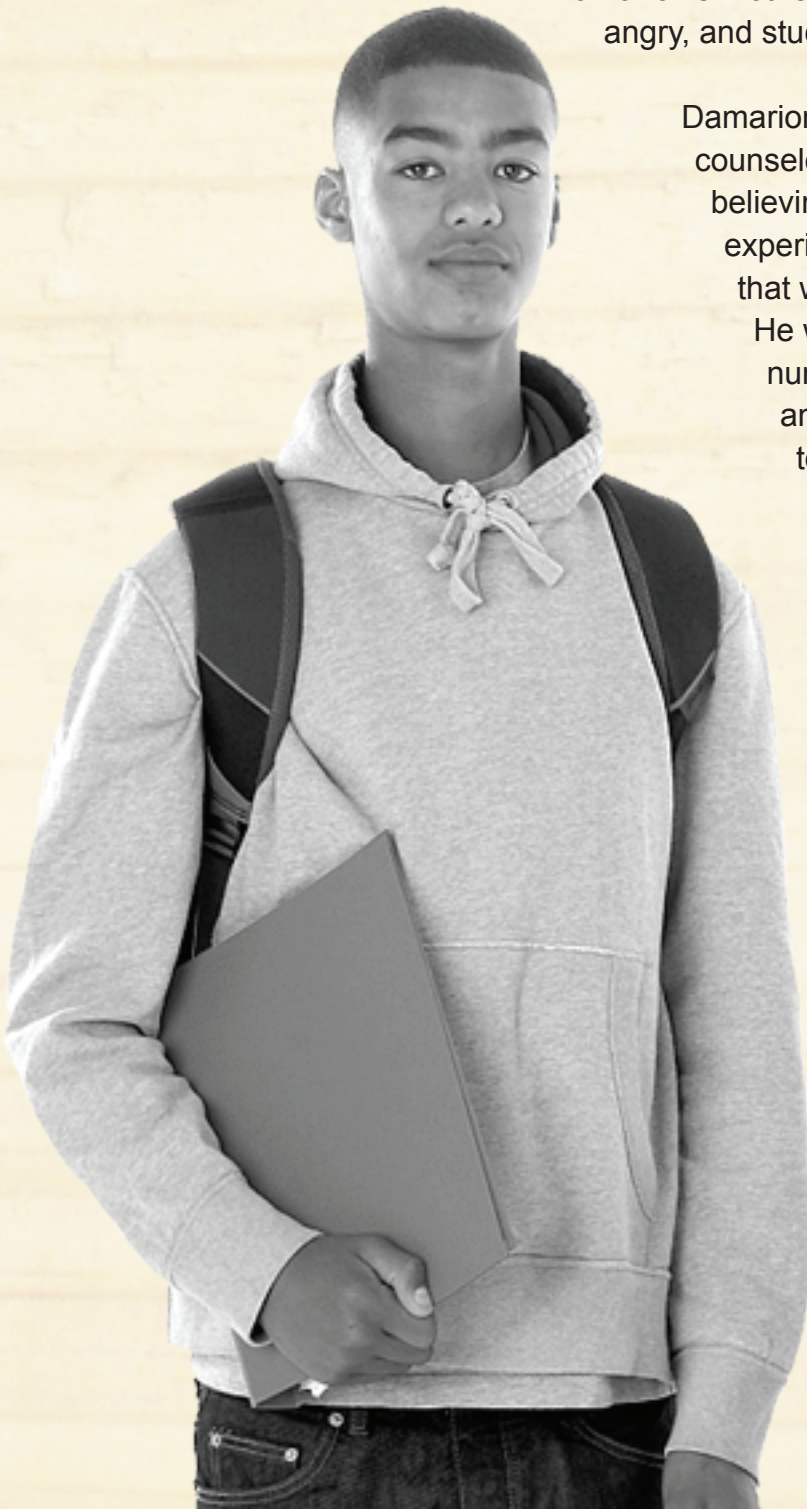
## CHILDREN of MURDERED PARENTS and SIBLINGS *losing a loved one to homicide*

Damarion, 16, was referred to DFYF's Children of Murdered Parents and Siblings program by an outside agency. He had not been successful in processing the grief of losing his father who was murdered 5 years prior. Damarion presented with persistent complex grief where he experienced a pervasive longing for his father, intense sorrow, preoccupation with the loss, and preoccupation with the circumstances of the death. He had difficulty accepting death's permanency and reality as he waited in expectation for his father to show up one day. Damarion described attempts to avoid and forget his father, his father's birthday, Father's Day, and Christmas. Damarion's mother saw her son as numb, detached, explosively angry, and stuck.

Damarion put in one year of hard work with his DFYF counselor. He started from a place of hopelessness believing nothing would change and that he would never experience happiness again. He worked to see the love that was in his life before and after his father's murder. He worked to courageously face his grief and to stop numbing himself. He created replacement thoughts and planned actions for each major holiday to "remember and rejoice". Damarion gained confidence in regulating his emotions, improved his motivation and hopefulness, and opened back up to the people in his life.

Damarion's grades turned back around. His teachers say the new problem is he will not stop talking now.

**In addition to our Children of Murdered Parents/Siblings program, DFYF provides a Children Who Witness Violence program serving youth who have witnessed violence in their own homes, schools, or neighborhoods.**





## AFTER-SCHOOL and SUMMER PROGRAMS YOUTH CENTERS *providing new opportunities for at-risk youth*

### Brenton is one of our youth center's shining stars



Brenton has been attending Ohio Avenue Youth Center and performing with our music groups for the last five years. He was recently accepted to Central State University with an admissions scholarship. He will audition for their school of music in the coming weeks.

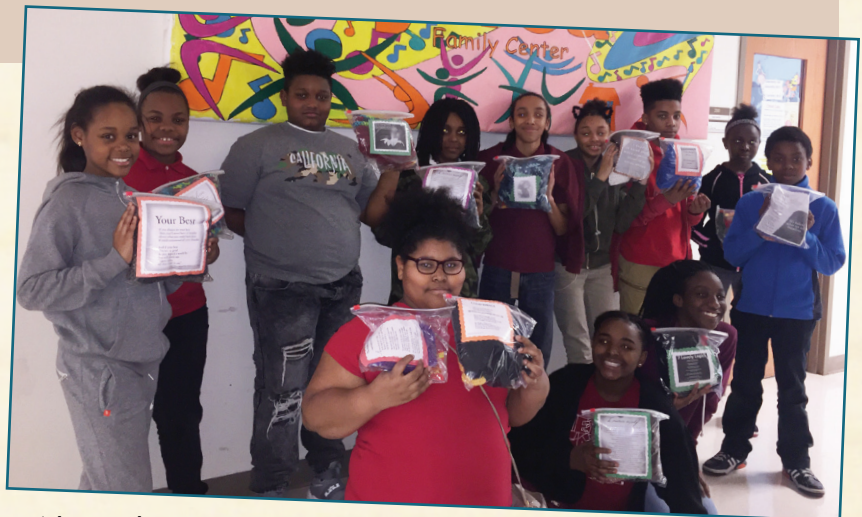
After developing and honing his skills at Ohio Avenue he was able to perform with the Columbus Youth Symphony, World Harvest Church, and Grove City United Methodist bands.

Brenton received the Firebird Award as the student who best represents his school at the Franklinton Preparatory Academy. In addition to developing his musical talents, he also grew socially and naturally expresses himself

through music. Serving as a Counselor in Training at Ohio Avenue's summer camp enhanced his leadership skills and contributed to strengthening his self-efficacy. Brenton was observed as a truly positive role model for the younger summer youth participants as he showed patience and natural abilities at redirecting youth and in collaborating with staff showing a great maturity level.

### Our youth center's offer more than just recreation, tutoring, and creative arts programming

TOP (Teen Outreach Program) is one of our programs that assists youth in developing life skills. Earlier this year the kids discussed homelessness and worked on a service project for families at the YWCA Family Center. Service projects are one way to build character, values and empathy for others. Care packages with scarves, hand warmers, and poems of encouragement were delivered to the YWCA Center. They also had the opportunity to tour the shelter and learn about homelessness.



The day after the visit Crittenton Center staff received a message from one of the TOP parents:

"I just wanted to thank you for taking the kids to the shelter. My son came home last night and thanked me for always working, and being a great mom. It really warmed my heart. I almost cried. Thank you."



## BUILDING BRIGHT FUTURES

### *outreach counseling for youth at risk for school failure*

Arista began services with DFYF when she was 17 years old. At that time, she had over 23 behavioral incidents at school due to fighting with peers and insubordination. She was also struggling to deal with family issues at home. She had already failed the first grading period of the semester and was in the process of failing the second grading period as well. Arista's school made a referral for her to join DFYF's Building Bright Futures program.

While meeting weekly with her DFYF worker, Arista learned how to identify her feelings and express them in a positive manner. She learned her triggers to anger and strategies to control her anger. She began seeing improvements in her interactions with her peers, school staff, and in her personal relationships.



March

In March, after 5 months of services, Arista was awarded "Most Improved Student" of her high school class and had only received one suspension, which was actually the result of helping a peer that was being bullied. By the end of the school year, she successfully passed her third and fourth grading periods with A's and B's. She was awarded "Most Improved Student of the Year," a selection made from her entire school. Arista is now in her senior year and plans to attend college at Ohio University Pickerington to receive her bachelor's degree in Law Enforcement. She has a new perspective on the value and importance of education, as well as a new understanding of how to manage and express her emotions and deal with challenges in her life.



of the Year!

## POSITIVE PATHS PARENTING CLASSES

### *reduce incidence and risk of child abuse/neglect* *strengthen and improve family functioning*

Ashley was referred to DFYF's Positive Paths Parenting program through the Franklin County Courts and successfully completed the four week Active Parenting classes. Since taking the course she has obtained full custody of her son and is working full time. Ashley shared that she continues to utilize what she has learned in Active Parenting in her everyday life, not only with her son but with family, friends, and coworkers. She said applying what she learned means she pays close attention to how she communicates with others and focuses on her words, tone of voice, body language, and facial expressions.

Ashley is very excited that her relationship with her son has improved. She is hopeful about their future together.





## TEEN PARENT CONNECTION

*serves pregnant or parenting youth*

The most important thing I learned is to never be ashamed to ask for help.

I was 16 and very sad. I never knew sadness could last so long. No one would listen, I began to feel invisible. My best friend died unexpectedly the day before we were to go shopping together for homecoming. My parents hated each other and I felt alone.



I wanted to die. I would tell my family I wanted to die but everyone would tell me to just get it together. I swallowed 120 pills and woke up in the hospital. Still, no one around me asked me why. And to top it off I found out I was pregnant, which created more family drama.

I ended up at Nationwide Children's Hospital Teen Pregnancy Clinic and they referred me to DFYF's Teen Parent Connection (TPC) program. I was a minor and my family would not allow me to participate in counseling, they just told me to grow up. I kept asking for help. One of the TPC counselors spoke with my mother and convinced her to let me try the program.

I worked with the TPC counselors who listened to me, gave me support and helped me to find other supports. They even took me to the hospital when I was in labor because I was alone and no one would come to take me. I was scared. They took turns waiting in labor and delivery with me until someone in my family showed up.



I was able to deliver my son, graduate from high school on time, get a job, and learn to express my feelings with the support from DFYF. I was doing well.

Many months later, after my case was closed, I found myself alone and abandoned as I was put out of the house. I had no one again. I reached out to my TPC counselor who came to pick me up from a park bench in the rain and made sure I reached a safe place and could get the help I needed.



I'm doing good now, I have my own home, a job and I am a good mother. I would have to say that the most important thing I've learned is to never be ashamed to ask for help. Also, being a mother now, I've learned to always make sure my child is okay, because I realized that my parents' issues rubbed off on me and I was always made to feel like I had to choose. A child should never have to choose or be put in the middle of their parents who no longer like each other. I felt broken and forgotten and now know that it was never my fault.

My parents did not change, but I did. Today I am stronger and happier.

*-Jasmine*



# READY SET GROW

## *in-home kindergarten readiness program working with children and their parents*

Anthony was 3 years old when he started the RSG program. He spoke little English, exhibited very shy behaviors, seldom left his home and often stood on the outside of children groups observing. Gradually, we took trips to the library for story time, Metro Parks, and weekly RSG appointments at Ohio Avenue Youth Center's play room. His parents were very responsive to suggestions and asked for help to enroll him into a Head Start program for the upcoming year. Anthony loved learning and began to involve himself in new activities, taking the initiative to jump in and try.

- He began to trace and write on his own.
- He learned to draw people with many details.
- He liked math, shapes, colors, patterns, and using scissors.
- He loved books. As time progressed Anthony could answer questions to the stories read each week.
- He became more playful and initiated conversation at sessions.



Meeting new friends and engaging in constructive play are all part of the RSG experience



He could count to ten and knew half of the alphabet upon completion of the RSG program. Interpreters were no longer needed after a few months of spending time with the family. Anthony's mother was most surprised when he met another child at the Center's play room and within minutes the two became buddies. His mother began to feel confident that Anthony had the capacity to establish friendships. Mother and father are so happy their son is thriving.



Ready Set Grow kids and parents enjoy the Early Childhood Education Room at DFYF's Ohio Avenue Youth Center

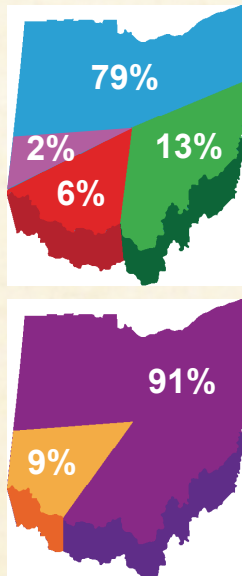




## Clients Served in 2016

Counseling and Clinical Services:	4,940
Prevention, Education and After-School Programs:	2,774
Parenting and Early Childhood Programs:	351
<b>Total Served:</b>	<b>8,065</b>

## Statement of Revenue and Expense for Fiscal Year 2016



### Revenue:

Government	\$5,832,807
United Way	\$ 951,496
Contributions	\$ 457,632
Other	\$ 119,676
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$7,361,611</b>

### Expense:

Program Services	\$6,780,171
Administrative & Fundraising	\$ 697,188
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$7,477,359</b>

## How You Can Support the Work of DFYF

**ADVOCATE** - when you are done reading this annual report, pass it along. Please tell others about the work we do in the community.

**DONATE** - Make a tax-deductible contribution by visiting our website at [www.dfyf.org](http://www.dfyf.org).  
Or mail to:

Donations  
Directions for Youth & Families  
1515 Indianola Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43201

**FUTURE GIFTS** - Ensure that youth are supported through counseling and education programming in the future through a bequest to DFYF. Contact [gifts@dfyf.org](mailto:gifts@dfyf.org) for information or to indicate that you have already included DFYF in your estate plans.

**RAISE MONEY** - Start your own fundraising campaign to support DFYF programs and services and make a difference.  
For information, contact [gifts@dfyf.org](mailto:gifts@dfyf.org).



## STATS & 2016 DFYF PROGRAM RESULTS

*\* 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 20 boys is a victim of child sexual abuse - C. Townsend, Darks to Light 2013*

DFYF's PROMISES program provides individual, family and group counseling to sexually abused youth in Central Ohio. 92% of participants showed improvement from negative effects of abuse.

*\* More than 60% of children surveyed were exposed to violence within the last year.*

*\* 28% of 20,000 homicides are related to domestic violence. - Dept. of Justice 2009; Survivor Resources 2002*

DFYF served 125 youth in our "Children Who Witness Violence" and "Children of Murdered Parents/Siblings" programs. These programs provided home/school and community-based individual, family and group counseling.

*\* In 2013, 21% of Ohio high school students reported seeing a doctor, nurse, therapist, social worker or counselor for a mental health problem.*

*\* 1 out of 10 students reported attempting suicide in the last year - U.S. Department of Justice 2009*

DFYF's Outreach Counseling Program provided over 1,700 youth and their families counseling and community support services.

*\* There were estimated 9,473 teen births in 2014, ages 15-19 in Ohio. - Ohio Department of Health 2015*

DFYF's Teen Parent Connection program served 77 pregnant or parenting youth and their families through age 21. Home/school/community-based individual and family counseling is offered along with community support and case management.

*\* An estimated 1,670 children died from abuse and neglect in the United States in 2015.*

*\* In 2015, an estimated 2,300 children were abused in Franklin County. - National Children's Alliance, 2015*

DFYF's Positive Paths Parenting classes provided 196 parents with programming to strengthen and improve family functioning and reduce the risk of child abuse/neglect.

*\* 40,191 arrests were made of children under the age of 18. - Ohio.gov, 2009*

DFYF's Building Bright Futures services offered counseling and community support services for 147 youth involved in the Juvenile Court system.

*\* In Ohio, 23% (431,489) of K-12 youth are responsible for taking care of themselves after school. - After School Alliance, 2017*

In 2016, 314 youth attended Ohio Avenue Youth Center and 111 youth attended Crittenton Center. DFYF's after-school and summer programs assist in boosting academic performance, emphasize education regarding substance abuse, and decrease delinquent behavior. We offer homework help, leadership development, and computer training, as well as opportunities for music, art, dance and other recreational activities in a safe and structured place.

*\* Estimated 9.4% of adolescents (2.3 million) used illicit drugs in the month prior to being surveyed. - Center for Behavioral Health, 2014*

*\* 23% of Ohio's youth had used marijuana in the last 30 days. - Youth Risk Behavior, 2011*

DFYF's Healthy Alternatives for Youth program provides counseling for youth, 12-18, who are experiencing substance use issues. Services include individual/family counseling, case management and group counseling.



## State of the Child SPONSORS 2017

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MILLS | JAMES



The stories told in this report are based on actual events that occurred in the lives of our clients. The identities have been altered to protect the children and their families.

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