



Shaping Smiles of the Future



IMPACT REPORT

FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025
JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025

A Message from our CEO



Dear Friends, Partners, & Supporters

As I reflect on this past year, I am struck by the extraordinary courage, creativity, and resilience of the young people we serve. Every day at Directions for Youth & Families, we witness the potential of youth—potential that, when nurtured, has the power to transform not only individual lives, but entire communities.

This year, with your support, we reached more than 9,000 children and young adults through programs that offered mental health counseling, educational learning opportunities, parental support, and safe spaces to grow. Behind every number is a story: a youth who discovered their voice in a leadership program, a young person who found a sense of belonging in our after-school community, a teenager who realized for the first time that his future could hold opportunity rather than obstacles. These stories are the heartbeat of our work.

But as we celebrate these milestones, we also recognize the broader landscape. Young people today are navigating unprecedented challenges—educational disruptions, mental health pressures, social inequities, and a rapidly changing world. They are inheriting a future that demands adaptability, empathy, and vision. Our responsibility as an organization is not only to respond to immediate needs, but to prepare youth for their future.

That is why our vision is expansive. We are not content with serving young people one by one, as important as that is—we are committed to reshaping the systems and communities around them so that all youth have access to opportunity, dignity, and hope. This year, we expanded the Crittenton Community Center’s partners to broaden access to food, medical care and social unity events. We expanded our counseling programs with schools, families, and community organizations to build stronger support networks.

Our vision continues to grow, during these challenging times, to better meet the needs of those we serve. Our supporters, partners, staff, and volunteers are the driving force behind this movement. When you give, volunteer, advocate, or simply share our story, you affirm that young people are worth investing in. And you remind them that they are not alone in their journey.

Our vision for the future is one where every young person feels seen, valued, and given the opportunity to thrive. It is a future built not on chance, but on intentional action, shared responsibility, and unwavering hope. Together, we are not just preparing young people for the world as it is; we are equipping them to imagine and create the world as it could be.

On behalf of our entire team and the youth whose lives you touch, thank you for believing in this vision. With your partnership, we will continue to light pathways of possibility.

With gratitude, hope and appreciation,



Duane Casares
Chief Executive Officer





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Mission: Build and inspire hope, healing, and resilience for youth, families, and communities through counseling and education.

At Directions for Youth & Families (DFYF), we believe every child and family has unique strengths waiting to be discovered. Since 1899, we have worked alongside youth and families, helping them navigate challenges, build resilience, and embrace brighter futures.

Through DFYF’s trauma-informed services, including clinical counseling, after-school programs, and early childhood initiatives, we provide tools that equip young people to heal, grow, and thrive.

Our approach is rooted in listening first. By meeting people where they are, we learn their stories and understand their needs. As licensed social workers, mental health professionals, and prevention specialists, we know that healing doesn’t happen in isolation. When children and families are supported, whole communities flourish. With our dedicated staff, partners, and supporters, we are not only responding to the immediate needs of our community but planting seeds of hope, resilience, and opportunity that will continue to grow for generations to come.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Fiscal year 2025 DFYF served more youth, expanded our reach, and deepened our impact in the Central Ohio community. It was a year of growth, resilience, and commitment to the youth and families we serve.



ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE CRITTENTON COMMUNITY CENTER



EXPANDING OUR IMPACT



OUR ANNUAL STATE OF THE CHILD CELEBRATION



CELEBRATING CRITTENTON

In October 2024, we proudly celebrated the first anniversary of Crittenton Community Center. In this short time, the Center has become an invaluable resource for the East-land community, a place where youth find safety, encouragement, and opportunity every day.

Since opening our doors, our Crittenton after-school/summer program has tripled the number of young people reached from previous years. With our expanded capacity, we are now able to welcome more youth than ever before, without the concern of turning anyone away.

As our capacity to serve more youth continues to grow, so does the recognition of our Crittenton Community Center. In 2024, the Center received the Columbus Business First Building Columbus Best Community Impact Award and the American Institute of Architects Merit Award. These honors are more than acknowledgments of design, they reflect the life-changing work and quality of care happening within our walls each day. We are grateful for a space that not only inspires pride in our community but also ensures that youth and families will receive exceptional support for decades to come.



EXPANDING OUR IMPACT with SEE KIDS DREAM

As DFYF continued to excel in caring for youth and families, we recognized an opportunity to expand the ways we empower young people to thrive. See Kids Dream, a nonprofit dedicated to developing compassionate leaders through year-long, school-based service-learning programs, was a natural partner. Their model blends education with community impact, guiding students to identify needs, research causes, and design projects that build empathy, leadership skills, and a lifelong commitment to civic engagement. These are the very qualities that prepare youth for success and resilience in adulthood.



NON-PROFIT MERGER

On July 1, 2024, Directions for Youth & Families and See Kids Dream merged. Together, we are expanding our reach and strengthening our impact, ensuring that youth across our community are equipped with the skills, confidence, and compassion to build brighter futures and the vision to see themselves as leaders and change makers.

1000+
youth leaders



36th ANNUAL STATE OF THE CHILD

This year, we proudly celebrated the 36th annual State of the Child event, DFYF's signature fundraiser. More than just an event, State of the Child provides our supporters with a unique, inside look into the impactful programming taking place at our agency every day.

Youth from our Ohio Avenue Youth Center and Crittenton Community Center showcased the skills they've developed throughout the year, whether through art, entrepreneurship, or performance. This event was a celebration of their talents and also of their resilience, creativity, and determination.

State of the Child brought together more than 300 attendees and over 20 corporate sponsors, each helping to amplify the impact of our mission. For many supporters, State of the Child is their chance to see firsthand how their investment positively affects lives. The event is a testament to what happens when young people are given the tools, resources, and encouragement to thrive. More than a fundraiser, it is an immersive experience that captures the essence of our mission: to inspire hope and healing for youth and families.

OUR PROGRAMS



EARLY CHILDHOOD



COUNSELING



SEE KIDS DREAM



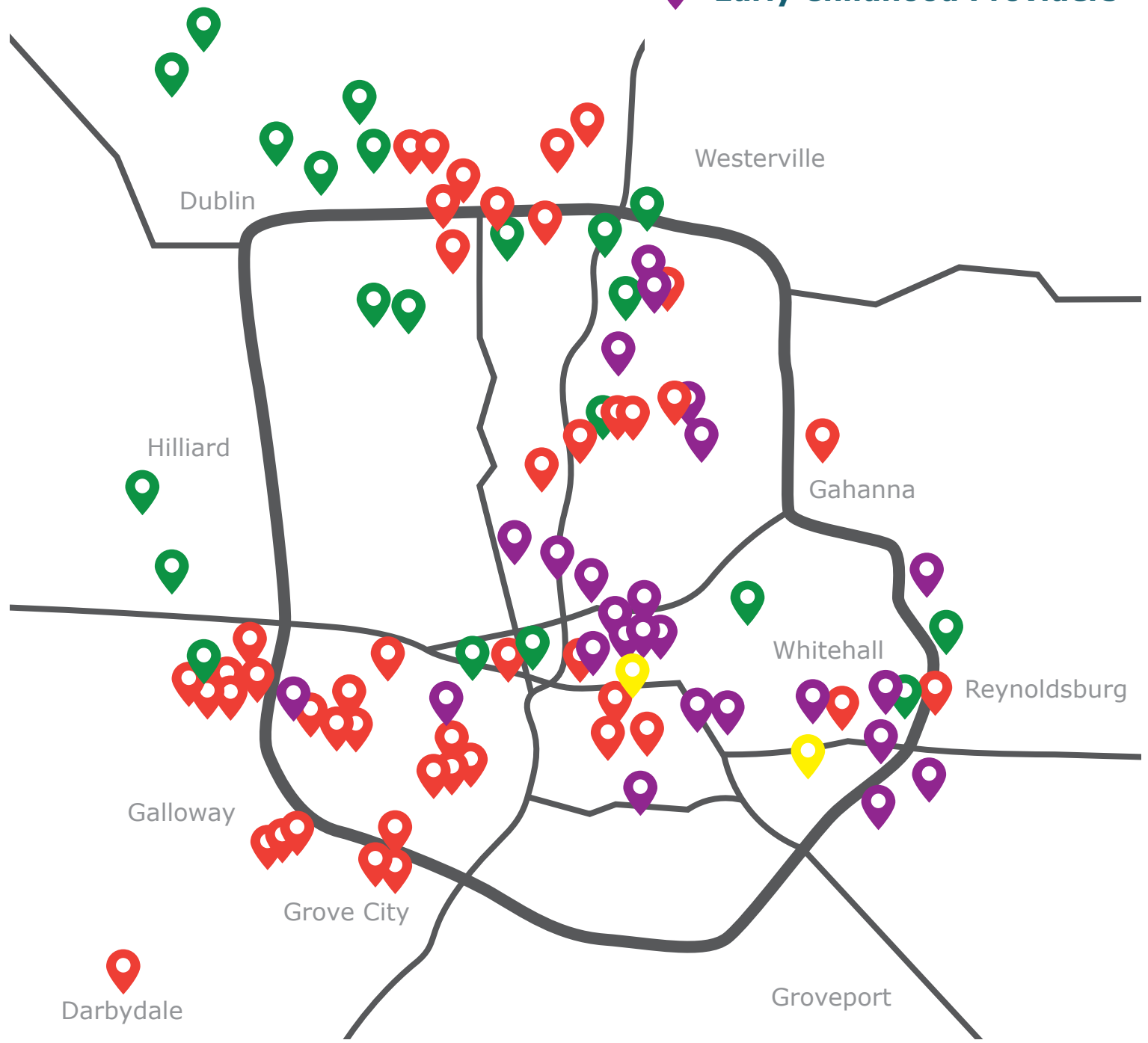
**AFTER-SCHOOL/
SUMMER PROGRAMS**



**COMMUNITY
RESTORATION**

MAPPING OUR IMPACT IN CENTRAL OHIO

-  **Partner Schools**
-  **See Kids Dream Schools**
-  **After-School Centers**
-  **Early Childhood Providers**



9,035 Clients Served

Ready, Set,
Grow

45
youth & families served

100%
improvement toward
their treatment goals

Head Start
& Prenatal

552
families served

1916
dental, vision, hearing
screenings
& exams

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Ready, Set, Grow is DFYF’s in-home kindergarten readiness program for children ages three to six. During this six-month program, our specialists work directly with families to enhance learning and assist parents with child development skills. Development assessments and screenings are used to create individualized learning plans for each child. DFYF specialists provide educational materials and connect parents with community resources. Once the child is ready, our specialists provide assistance in enrolling them into pre-school, Head Start, kindergarten, or special needs educational services.



DFYF partners with The Ohio State University to provide case management and support services for their **Head Start and prenatal programs**. These programs focus on providing high-quality early childhood education and care for children and families who live in households experiencing poverty. DFYF Family Specialists work to connect families with community resources including housing stability, workforce development, continued education, and financial security. Together we are striving to ensure equal access to early childhood education and services.



CLINICAL COUNSELING

DFYF’s clinical counseling program offers trauma-informed, resiliency-oriented counseling and support services to children and families in the Central Ohio area. We have over 40 licensed counselors and qualified mental health specialists who provide services in clients’ homes, schools, and other community settings, to reduce barriers to treatment and provide care in the environment it is needed.

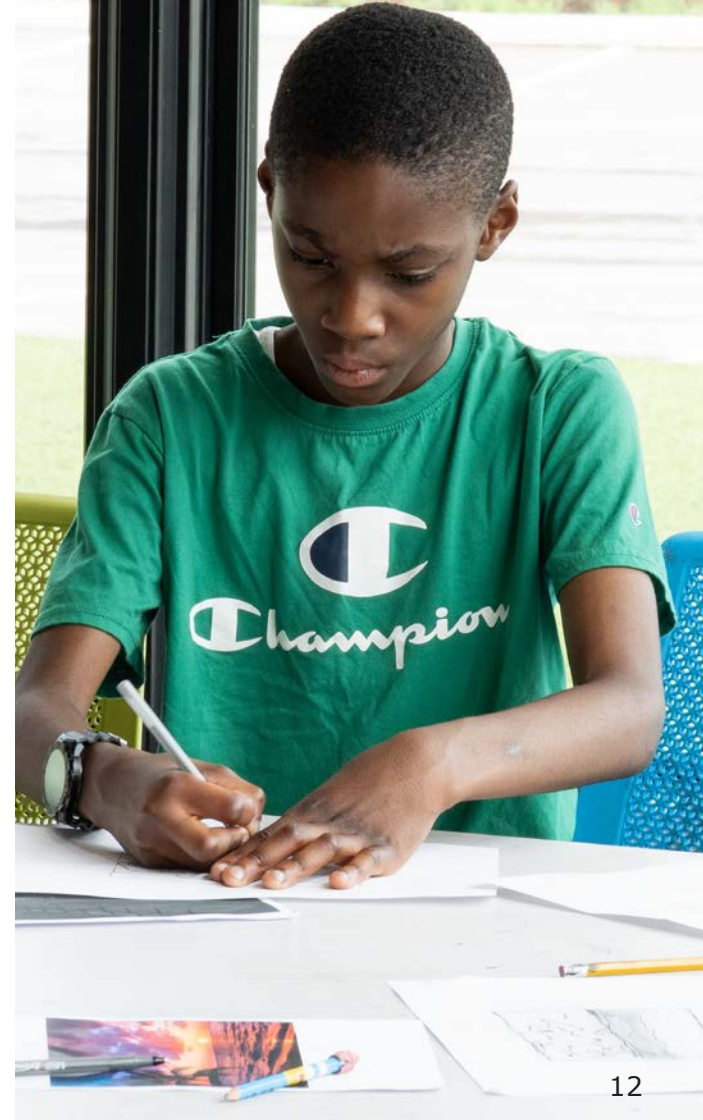
3675
non-client
interventions in
schools

2757
youth
served

330
schools
served

Specialty areas include:

- **School Connections** partnership with South-Western, Worthington, Gahanna-Jefferson, and Columbus City Schools
- **Outreach Counseling** our community-based counseling provided throughout Central Ohio
- **Building Bright Futures** for youth at risk for school failure
- **PROMISES** for survivors of sexual abuse
- **Children Who Witness Violence** to address trauma from domestic and neighborhood violence
- **Children of Murdered Parents/Siblings** to address grief and loss due to the death of a loved one
- **Healthy Alternatives for Youth** with substance abuse issues
- **Youth Pride** for youth who identify as LGBTQIA+
- **Teen Parent Connection** for pregnant or parenting youth
- **Outpatient Counseling** for adult and family counseling



AFTER-SCHOOL & SUMMER PROGRAMS

DFYF operates two youth centers where we host our after-school and summer programs. Located in high-risk, under-resourced neighborhoods, our Centers provide a safe, positive environment for youth ages 8-18. Here, youth are encouraged to think creatively, try new experiences, develop tools for self-expression, and give back to their community through the arts and service projects.

\$0 Cost to Families

322 youth served

14,700 meals served

2 Youth Centers



< **Crittenton Community Center**
3840 Kimberly Pkway N.
Columbus, OH 43232

> **Ohio Avenue Youth Center**
657 S. Ohio Avenue
Columbus, OH 43205



In our after-school and summer programming, we strategically implement curriculum and activities that align with the social-emotional needs of youth. Peer group and team building activities are incorporated throughout the day and help youth develop the knowledge and skills that will increase healthy living choices. Transportation as well as healthy meals and snacks are provided each day, at no-cost to families.

Programming includes:

- Homework Help & Tutoring
- Stride Academy
- STEAM Labs
- Digital Literacy and Safety Skills
- Healthy Leaders Groups
- Substance Use Prevention
- Life Skills Education Groups
- Creative Arts
- Recreation & Fitness
- Clubs
- Field Trips & College Visits



SEE KIDS DREAM



We recently added See Kids Dream's (SKD) service-learning programs to our list of in-school services. Throughout the school year, we partner with elementary and middle schools in Central Ohio to facilitate programs during the school day. SKD programs combine education with community service, allowing youth of all ages to be in the decision-making role. Students identify needs in our community, do research, and create projects to address the issues most important to them. Together, we are empowering youth with the skills, motivation, and confidence to make our world a better place.

1,079
student leaders

\$18,409
donated to non-profits

26,000+
hours of service learning

COMMUNITY RESTORATION INITIATIVE

Directions for Youth & Families’ vision to build healthy individuals, strong families, and safe communities is a vision rooted in community restoration and social justice. Like most things, there is no one-size-fits-all, prescriptive approach to these issues. The healing of individuals is directly impacted by the communities and environments in which they live. We believe that communities can heal themselves, they just need the resources and tools to do so.

Change must be, as our slogan says, “by the community, for the community”. This concept underscores the importance of community involvement and highlights DFYF’s focus on revitalizing Eastland in a way that promotes positive, sustainable strides, unlike gentrification which leaves community members behind.



WIC Clinic	OhioHealth Mobile Unit	Crittenton Restoration
864 people	73 patients	30 volunteers
2046 services	152 services	31 community events



Our Community Restoration model being piloted at the Crittenton Community Center is doing just that. Developed in response to the lack of basic needs available in the Eastland area, our model works with the community, partners, and social service providers to bring needed services to impoverished areas. The Eastland community has been overlooked and under-served, with few businesses and few opportunities for its residents. It has one of the highest eviction rates in the city and is plagued with one of the highest infant mortality rates in Franklin County.

Working with community members, our Crittenton Community Center has taken great strides to address these issues. Partnering with WIC (Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program) and OhioHealth to address infant mortality and health disparities. Creating and organizing a community garden for residents and our youth. Providing digital skills classes for community members with the help of ConnectUS. And offering our Center as a safe space for community events and meetings. These are just a few of our accomplishments from the past year- and we’re just getting started.

DFYF LEADERSHIP TEAM



Duane Casares
CEO



John Cervi
COO



Pat Edwards
CFO



Viji Vagabandhu
NiSource



Toya Johnson
City of Columbus



Kathleen Kelly
Wellogy



Stephen Knauff
HR Chair
The Aspen Group



Humphrey R Kweminyi
Program Chair
Barnes & Thornburg LLP



Robert Lindner
BDO, USA



Jason Brett
Property Mgmt Chair
Messer Construction



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Dev & Mktg Chair
Kegler Brown Hill + Ritter



Ursula Cottone
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Huntington Bank



Kim Niswander
Parker Lee Foundation



Julie Sherwood
Chair
Retired



Ernest L. Sullivan
Sullivan Staffing
Strategies



Jourdan Day
Porter Wright



Jennifer Gray
Grange Insurance



Bill Grindle
Grindle Marketing

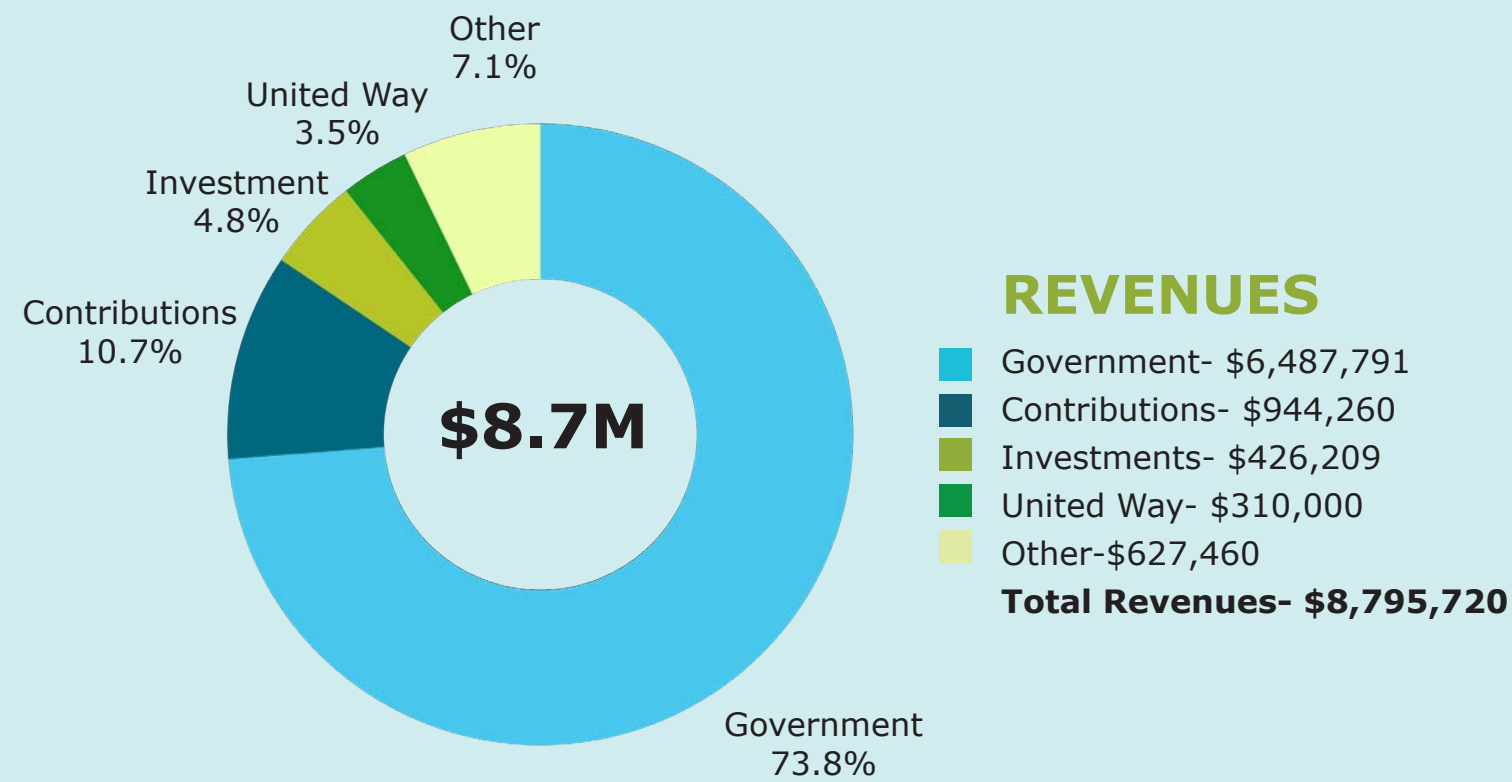


Deepak Visurakapalli
Consultant



Megan Warren
Treasurer
Plante Moran

FINANCIAL INFORMATION



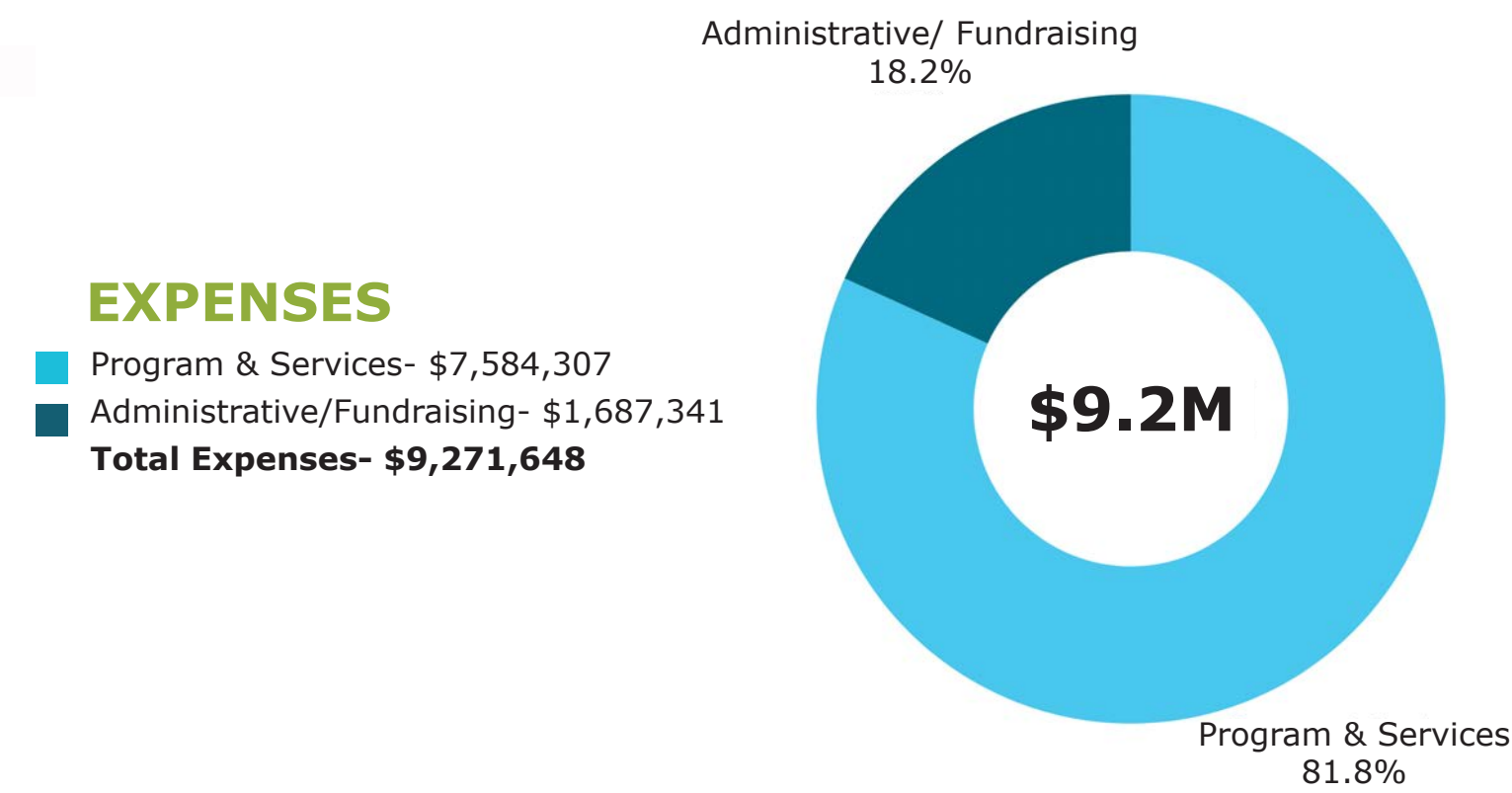
Our vision is building healthy individuals, strong families, and safe communities through innovative treatment and prevention services.

DFYF will always put people at the center of everything we do: the people in the community and the people we employ. Together, we build impact. We’re not here to do something to or for the people and communities we work in. We’re here to do something with the clients that we serve. For social good and for social justice.

Our vision for the future is a world in which all people can get the high-quality care they need, and they deserve, without barriers. No one should worry about whether they can afford childcare, whether they will be able to get a ride to provider centers, or if they’ll be turned away. That’s why the future of DFYF includes an expansion of our Community and School-based Clinical Services- reaching more clients, more schools, and more communities than ever before. That way youth and their families can get the help they need when and where they need it.

As we continue to pilot the Community Restoration model at our Crittenton Community Center, the next phase is all about expansion. One of the community’s first priorities was to bring health services and providers into the community - in our next phase we are further expanding access to nutrition classes, primary care, and maternal care with the help of WIC and OhioHealth. Creating safe spaces for all community members is just another piece of the puzzle. In addition to expanding community events and after-school/ summer programs, we are planning to add senior services, workforce development initiatives, and support for food insecurity and housing instability.

Our vision serves as our north star and the guiding light on the path ahead. It represents the importance of the work that we do in our community every day, and our continuing efforts toward creating a better future for youth, families, and communities throughout Central Ohio.



Financial data is preliminary and unaudited

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

We couldn't do it without you

Foundations & Corporate Funders

\$100,000 +
Osteopathic Heritage Foundation

\$20,000 - \$49,999
A. Irene Emswiler Fund
Acts of HumanKindness Fund
American Electric Power Foundation
Big Lots Foundation
Charles R and Irene M. Mougey Fund
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\$10,000 - \$19,999
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Childcare
Mary Nancy Davis Memorial Fund for
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NJM New Jersey Manufacturers
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The Robert Weiler Company

\$2,000 - \$4,999
City of Columbus Department of
Neighborhoods
Crane Group
Diamond Hill Investments Charitable
Foundation
Edna K. Jacobs Fund
Families for a Cure, Inc.
GIVE YOGA
Grange Insurance

Johnson Investment Counsel
JP Morgan Chase & Co
Kegler Brown Hill & Ritter
Marker
Nationwide Children's Hospital
OhioHealth
Park National Bank
Plante Moran, PLLC
Porter Wright
Rhema Christian Center
Target Circle
OSU Wexner Medical Center
United Way of Central Ohio
Worthington AM Rotary Club
Worthington Companies Foundation

< \$2,000
American Online Giving Foundation
BDO USA
BeecherHill
Cameron Mitchell Restaurants
Children's Society Fund
Dedicated Tech Services, Inc.
DesignGroup
Dewey's Pizza
Dinah Buehler Memorial Fund
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Ohio Attorney General, Health &
Human Services
OIA Service Corporation
Ora Lee Burns Fund
PNC
Schneider Downs
Scioto Services
Scott's Miracle-Gro Foundation
Sinclair Broadcast Group
Stryker
Sutton Entertainment Group
Take Two Software
The Columbus Foundation
OSU College of Social Work
OSU Head Start Child Care Partnership
Program
Thrivent Financial
United Way of Greater Atlanta

Individual Donors

\$10,000 +
Anonymous
Jon and Marialice Bennett
Tom and Nancy Lurie
Alan & Peggy Scantland
Margaret Steffel

\$2,500 - \$9,999
Tammy Dosch
Jennifer Gray
Douglas Gustina
Ramon Jones
Randall Marker
Michael O'Callaghan
Sandra Sherrill
Julie Sherwood

\$1,000 - \$2,499
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Jason and Jami Brett
John Brody
Gisella Burgos
Duane Casares
John Cervi
Ursula Cottone
Jourdan Day
Patricia and Tom Edwards
Christian Espinoza
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Kathryn Haller
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Viji Jagabandhu
Glenn Karr
Stephen Knauff
Chris Lauderback
Cynthia Lazarus
Robert Lindner
Melanie Tipton
John and Catherine Tucker
Megan Warren
Alan and Beatrice Weiler

Volunteers

Bath and Body Works
NetJets
BESA
Cardinal Health

Community Partners

ADAMH
Adelphi Bank
City of Columbus
City of Columbus, AIMS
City of Columbus, Dept of Education
City of Columbus, Dept of Neighborhoods
Columbus City Schools
Columbus Symphony Orchestra
ConnectUS
Conspiracy Band
COSI
Community Refugee & Immigration Services
Franklin County Board of Commissioners
Franklin County Children Services
Franklin County Job & Family Services
Franklin County Juvenile Court
Franklin County WIC Program
Gahanna City Schools
Homeport
Justice & Joy National Collaboration

Kroger
Legal Aid of Southeastern & Central Ohio
Local Civic, Homeowner, & Renter Associations
Liberians in Columbus
Mid-Ohio Food Collective
Neighborhood Design Center
Ohio Attorney General's Office
Ohio Department of Youth Services
OhioHealth Maternal Health Wellness on Wheels
OhioHealth Primary Care Wellness on Wheels
Ohio Mental Health & Addiction Services
OSU Extension Office Nutrition Education Classes
OSU Extension Office Master Gardener
Refugee & Immigrant Mental Health Coalition of Ohio
Smart Columbus
South-Western City Schools
The Center for Family Safety & Healing
The Ohio State University
United Way of Central Ohio
Worthington City Schools



**Serving the Community *in*
the Community**



**Hope, Healing,
and Opportunity**

**Together We Can Create
a Happier, Healthier
Community for All**



Directions 
for Youth & Families

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