



CEDARS

2015-2016

President's Annual Report

Helping Kids in Crisis. Building Strong Families.



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A Note From Jim Blue, President

I think about the legacy of CEDARS every time I walk through our doors. Since 1947, CEDARS has served children and struggling families, many of whom faced closed doors before finding an open door and a shoulder to lean on at CEDARS. I am grateful that they will be cared for and supported by the very best in the field, passionate professionals and foster parents who give all they have because they believe in the potential in each child.

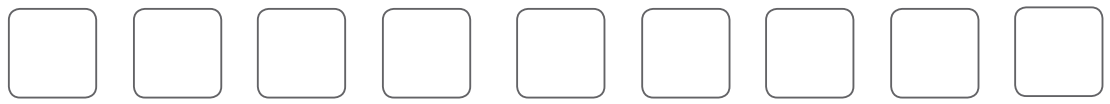
I know you believe in their potential too. That’s why you have chosen to invest in our work. Your financial support, your advocacy, your time—you enable each one of us to do this most valuable work each day.

My gratitude for each of you is immeasurable.

Thank you for helping us ensure that this nearly 70-year-old agency remains a safe and strong place for kids and families in need.

Together, we are helping our most vulnerable children find safety, stability and permanent families.

A Look Back



In the fall of 1947, the Cooperative Club (later renamed the Sertoma Club) brought the community together in support of a compassionate couple’s mission and formally established the CEDARS Home for Children.

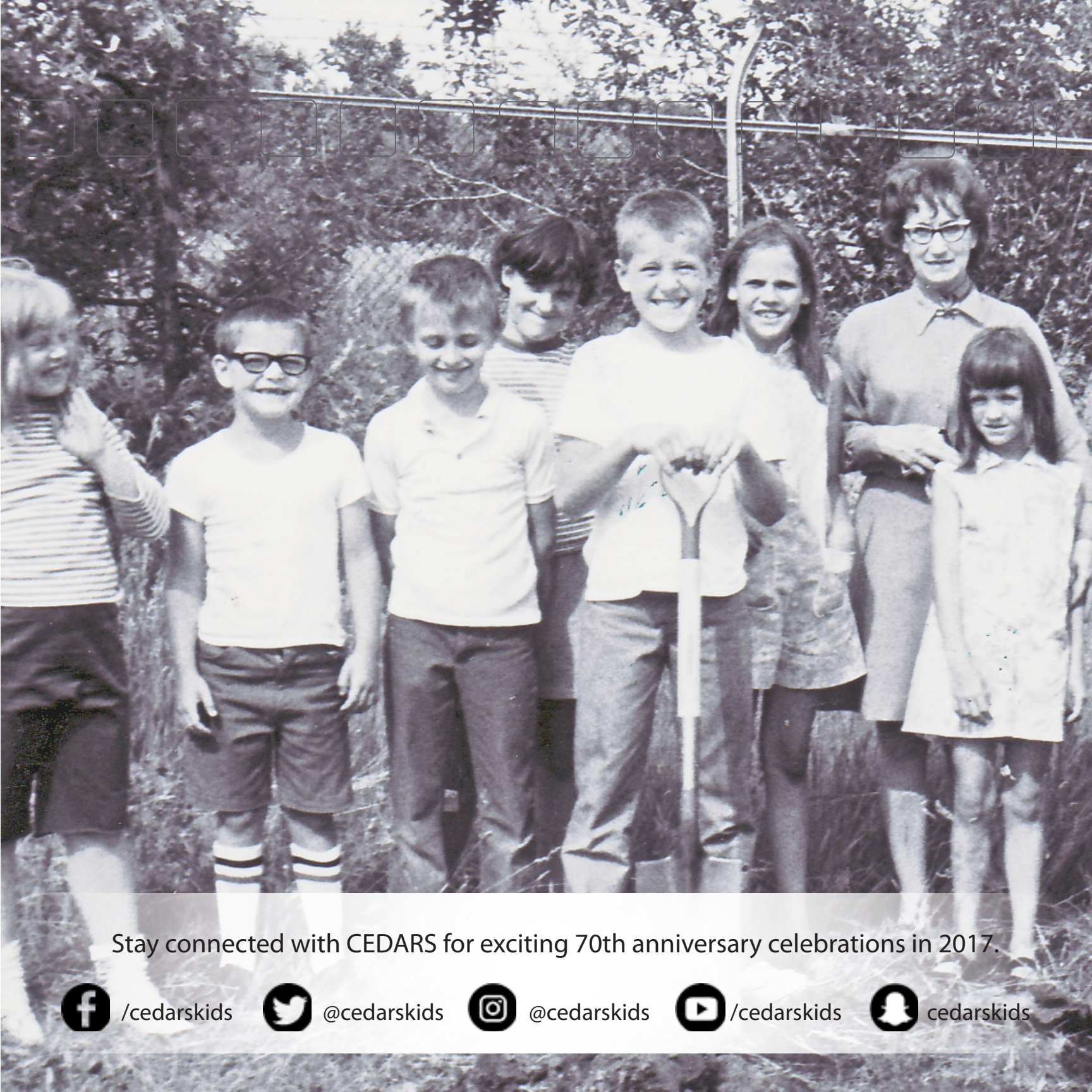
That couple, the Reverend Charles and Alberta Danner had hearts for helping children, but had no children of their own. Then in 1946 they became caregivers to one homeless young boy. They knew the moment they opened their door to his tentative yet hopeful soul that this was their mission in life. Shortly after, they arranged with the local police department so that whenever there was need for safe refuge for a young child, the police could knock on the door of the Danner home.

They soon had 22 children.

The Danners had the passion to make a safe and loving home for children, but without adequate funds they worried they wouldn’t be able to continue to care properly for their family.

They turned to the community. With the help of Hulda Roper, the first female police officer in Lincoln, and Marie Becker, a member of the Council of Church Women and the Cooperative club, CEDARS Home for Children was born.

Their vision for creating a place of safe refuge for children that have no other safe options endures still today.



Stay connected with CEDARS for exciting 70th anniversary celebrations in 2017.



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Cornerstone Service Area Summary



When CEDARS was founded in 1947, our founders knew that too many children in our community suffered physical abuse, neglect and homelessness. This is still true today. As we approach our 70th anniversary in 2017, the work of bringing safety to children remains as important as ever.

CEDARS is committed to helping kids in crisis and building strong families through our three integrated cornerstone service areas.



Providing safe and stable housing for children and youth who have no other safe place to spend the night will remain at the core of the CEDARS organization.

We will also continue to grow as a leader in the development and delivery of focused services to prevent abuse and neglect in vulnerable families.



For those children and youth unable to live at home due to neglect, abuse, homelessness, running away, or other family crises, CEDARS provides an individualized array of emergency and supportive housing to protect their safety, promote their healthy growth and development, and facilitate their successful transition to permanency.

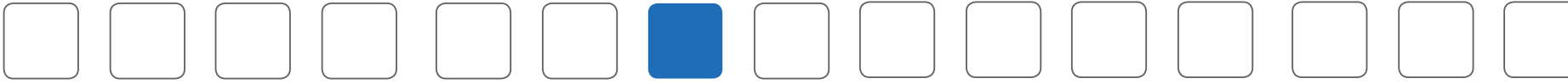


Focusing on maintaining positive family and community connections, family-strengthening services assist children and parents as families work to remain intact. CEDARS also provides children with early and ongoing developmental opportunities to become better learners.



For youth who are at risk for, or who have committed law violations, CEDARS provides positive development programs to prevent subsequent law violations, and prepare them to live successfully in the community. Youth receive support in the areas of education, employment, basic living skills, crisis intervention and healthy relationships.

A Closer Look: Out of Home Services



Children come into Out Of Home and Emergency Services when their families are in crisis. Our primary goal for every child is their safety. Once safe and stable, our focus turns to finding them a permanent home; whether that be back home with their family, in a new home, or sometimes for our older youth, successfully living independently.

CEDARS Pioneer Center

- The only Emergency Shelter in Southeast Nebraska for unaccompanied youth
- Serves as a hub of CEDARS Out of Home programming
- Temporary, safe refuge for youth ages 13-18
- In the past year, 143 youth found safe shelter at the Pioneers Center, an increase of nearly 6 percent from the previous year.

Foster Care

- Continues as the preferred placement for children and youth in need of a safe place to stay
- On any given day, we care for over 200 children and youth in foster families
- 50 percent of CEDARS foster family placements are “child specific” meaning the child has been placed with a relative, or an adult already known to the child. As this becomes more common and preferred, our support to “child specific” foster families is also adapting and increasing, as these families often have different needs.

Bridges & Street Outreach Services

CEDARS continues to build upon our services for older teens impacted by homelessness. Through our Bridges and Street Outreach Services, our trained staff are able to provide assistance in finding safe housing and offer the protection of CEDARS safety net services. Last year, CEDARS served 56 youth in Bridges and had contact with 530 youth through Street Outreach Services.

Today CEDARS will serve over **1,000** children and youth.

234 will be in Out of Home programs

15 will be in temporary emergency shelter

84% of children and youth leaving our Out of Home programs went to an equally permanent or more permanent environment



Selena’s Story

Selena came to CEDARS when she was fourteen. She was dealing with the pain and difficulty of having a traumatic childhood filled with extreme abuse and neglect. We immediately sought out safety and security for her in a loving foster family.

Jack and Donna welcomed her in and provided her with safety and love. Our team was there to support the family as they grew to know one another. When Jack and Donna learned that before coming to CEDARS, Selena had moved through four other foster homes, they were determined to be her last.

Our team of experts was able to provide Jack and Donna with parenting resources and stayed on-call at all times. Jack and Donna knew Selena’s love for dance could be a positive outlet for her, but they weren’t sure how they could fit lessons, tutoring and therapy sessions into the afternoons. Donna reached out to our team, and we were there to ensure that Selena had a ride from dance lessons to tutoring sessions or to therapy whenever she needed it. With this support, Selena has been able to find coping skills to be successful.

Just a few weeks after her seventeenth birthday, Selena was adopted by Jack and Donna as a permanent part of their family. We are so honored to have walked alongside them on this journey.



A Closer Look: Family Resources & Education

In some situations, the removal of a child from their home can be prevented. When vulnerable families are provided the necessary tools, resources, education and support, they can often successfully create safe and nurturing environments for their children to grow strong and healthy.

Our Family Resources and Education Services help families that are under-resourced or experiencing crisis to build stronger homes for youth of all ages.

One of the best tools for the healthy development of a child is quality early childcare. Last year, CEDARS was pleased to provide nationally-accredited care to over 200 young children in our two child development centers and over 550 elementary school age children through our Community Learning Centers which provide safe before and after school care for children.

CEDARS also works with families when they struggle to meet the basic needs of their children. Through an array of family-strengthening programs, families learn about appropriate child development, effective parenting tools and techniques, and receive help to access community resources.

176 families had access to support and guidance from CEDARS skilled family partners



Asher’s Story



This fall, CEDARS Northbridge Early Childhood Development Center, welcomed a new student, Asher. Asher’s mom recently removed herself and Asher from a bad situation. Although they are currently living safely with Asher’s grandma, this type of extreme change can be traumatic for a child. To make ends meet, Asher’s mom took on a second job. And we provided Asher’s family with a short-term scholarship to ensure they had a bit of time to adjust to the financial changes.

Due to his mom’s demanding schedule, Asher often didn’t get to see her before school and sometimes not before he went to bed. His grandma dropped him off, picked him up and made his meals. Asher told his teacher, Edina, that he missed his mommy. Edina worked with others on the CEDARS team to ensure that Asher’s mom and grandma were aware of all the community resources available to them to ease some of the stress and strain the family was feeling.

As the season progressed, when Edina asked her class to help decorate the classroom door for the annual Halloween door-decorating contest at the center, Asher bubbled with excitement. He told Edina and the rest of the class how his mom found him a costume for Halloween—not just any costume but his favorite superhero. Edina smiled, knowing that Asher’s mom has been able to spend more time with her family recently due to the new supports in her life. She has even been able to pick Asher up from the center several times. On one of those occasions, she expressed to Edina that the family feels more connected and stronger. A parenting class from CEDARS also helped her feel more connected with Asher and less stressed.

Edina reminded the class that the world can’t have too many superheroes, because we are all superheroes. Asher smiled.





A Closer Look: Juvenile Justice

Youth involved in the juvenile justice system at an early age can be at great risk for continued involvement with the court systems as they become adults. One estimate suggests that between 50 and 75 percent of adolescents who have spent time in juvenile detention centers are incarcerated later in life.

We believe in the potential of these youth and want to provide opportunities for youth who are at risk for or who have committed law violations to learn from their experiences and make positive changes to avoid future involvement with the law.

CEDARS Tracker and Electronic Monitoring services are two of a handful of programs we offer to youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Through these services, youth have the opportunity to remain in their homes, attend school, be employed and attend counseling while benefitting from additional structure we provide through one-on-one advocacy and supervision. Professional staff members offer accountability and compassion as they engage participants in shaping their futures.

In this past year, CEDARS Tracker and Electronic Monitoring services expanded to include “District 2” in Bellevue, Nebraska, a suburb of Omaha.

798 youth were served through Tracker and Electronic Monitoring services last year

Tremain’s Story



Fourteen-year-old Tremain felt overwhelmed by school. He was frustrated that he couldn’t seem to learn as fast as other kids in his class and felt embarrassed when teachers would call on him and he didn’t know the answer. To cope, he used behaviors that were inappropriate and which repeatedly lost him friends and got him sent home. His mother was distraught, but realized she didn’t have the answers, nor did she know who she could trust for help.

Because we have relationships with the schools in our community, we were able to contact the family and offer our services. We underscored that we wanted the family to succeed and remain together, not to be split apart. Tremain’s mom tearfully agreed that she wanted that too.

We worked closely with the family to set a course of action, including helping Tremain’s mom learn a style of consistent parenting. As with anyone encountering change, it was difficult for Tremain to adjust to new boundaries and expectations. After a heated exchange over dinner, he walked out the door.

Tremain’s mom called us in panic. She wanted Tremain at home where she knew he would be safe. We worked to locate Tremain and listen to his concerns. When he was ready, we took him home. His mom hugged him tight and expressed her thanks over and over. With time, her new consistent style of parenting helped bring stability to Tremain’s life and in time he used fewer and fewer inappropriate behaviors. We worked with Tremain to begin establishing healthy boundaries with friends, and to get caught up on his schoolwork so that each day didn’t feel quite so overwhelming.

Thanks to the advocacy work of our staff, Tremain has the confidence to set new goals for his future.



A Look Ahead



In 2015, CEDARS embarked on a new two-year strategic plan to address persistent and ongoing driving forces that affect our daily work with the community’s most vulnerable children. After CEDARS leadership presented five primary objectives for the agency, the work began. Here’s what has been happening:

Outcome-Based Definition of Success

Our Goal: In order to address government and major private sector decisions being increasingly influenced by performance outcomes, CEDARS will establish an independent but industry-aligned definition of success, which is outcome-based, for every child in CEDARS care. We will make certain that our efforts to measure the safety, stability and well-being of the children in our care are appropriately resourced, ingrained in our culture and communicated to a broad set of stakeholders.

What we have done so far: Two primary outcomes have been established for each child leaving CEDARS care. Were they safe while in our care? Are they leaving our care for a stable and permanent environment? Stability takes many forms in the broad array of programs offered at CEDARS. Over the past year and a half, our staff worked together closely to set up parameters specific to each program and began implementing them. We are continuing to monitor our effectiveness in moving kids into more permanent living situations once they leave CEDARS.

Out-Of-Home
& Emergency
Services

Juvenile
Justice

Family
Resources &
Education

Enhanced Environment of Care

Our Goal: In order to address persistently unmet behavioral health needs of the children, youth and families in our care, CEDARS will establish a Clinical Lead to assess the needs of the children and youth in our care and work within our programs to develop a significantly enhanced environment of care that incorporates a therapeutic overlay.

What we have done so far: In an effort to better meet the needs of youth while in CEDARS care we have made an investment to secure an individual to serve as a Clinical Lead as well as an additional on-site Mental Health Practitioner. The goal of increased therapeutic support is to stabilize youth while they are in care so that they can move to a more permanent home with all of the necessary supports in place. In the coming year, CEDARS leadership will continue to investigate additional therapeutic overlays that will create an enhanced environment of care.

Support for Foster Families

Our Goal: Family-based foster care is the predominant out-of-home care resource in Nebraska, and placement with a family that is known to the child is preferred. CEDARS will work to provide additional support to meet the unique needs of every foster child and family in the foster care program. With an aim to remove barriers for success, we will seek to provide the tangible resources and tools necessary for children to stay in the foster home and successfully work toward independence or permanency.

What we have done so far: Thanks to generous donor support, the CEDARS Foster Care team has assembled care kits for families opening their homes to a child relative or a child they already know.

Often this placement comes as a surprise to the family, and they don’t have the time or resources to prepare. Our care kits may include smoke detectors, a fire extinguisher, tool sets, baby proofing items, a gift card or other appropriate items to meet their needs. CEDARS foster care team also launched online training tools for current foster parents in order to better meet their demanding schedules as we seek to resource them with knowledge of proper parenting techniques. This service has had a highly positive response from current foster parents. Additionally, two Foster Care team members were sent to be trained in a specific kinships support model called “Caring For Your Own,” which will greatly help the staff to better meet the needs of kinship parents.

Employer of Choice

Our Goal: CEDARS will be the employer of choice for four-year degree students entering the fields of criminal justice and human services. CEDARS will offer the qualities of a workplace that attract, engage and retain the newest generation of talent. We will be the organization where employees find a supportive and growth-oriented work

culture, professionals can come and find their fit through great workplace flexibility and future leaders can learn from the best in the industry.

What we have done so far: As part of a holistic marketing plan, new, clear messaging is being created to aid potential employees in better understanding how their involvement will impact the lives of vulnerable children, and what they can expect when they become an employee of CEDARS. Additionally, outreach to nearby colleges and universities is being cultivated in order to be in the forefront of new graduates’ minds.

Engagement in Strategic Partnerships

Our Goal: CEDARS will use its unique vantage point into abuse and neglect of children and commit to further study the varied points of greatest vulnerability for children and families. CEDARS will then engage in strategic partnerships that allow us to intersect with families in Southeast Nebraska when they are at greatest risk.

What we have done so far: In order to make meaningful systemic change, CEDARS team members have spent numerous hours in conversation with other child-caring agencies, public and private stakeholders, and governmental agencies to determine the times of greatest vulnerability for children. As a result CEDARS is embarking on a strategic effort to increase early prevention activities in targeted areas of the community where indicators of increased potential for child maltreatment exist.





Financial Highlights

CEDARS Consolidated Financial Highlights (Fiscal Year End June 30, 2016)

ASSETS & LIABILITIES

Total Assets	\$29,705,678
Total Liabilities	\$2,118,408
Total Net Assets	\$27,587,270

REVENUES

Contributions & Support	\$1,936,735
Grant & Service Revenue	\$9,580,199
Investment Income	(\$253,883)
Total Revenues	\$11,263,051



Financial Highlights

CEDARS Program Expenses (Fiscal Year End June 30, 2016)

PROGRAM SERVICES

Out of Home & Emergency Services	\$5,080,281
Family Resources & Education	\$2,368,674
Juvenile Justice	\$1,995,608
Evaluation	\$107,171
Shared Indirect	\$1,586,612
Total Program Services	\$11,138,346

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Management & General	\$957,844
Fundraising	\$348,882
Total Supportive Services	\$1,306,726

TOTAL EXPENSES	\$12,445,072
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Donor Support



The important work of helping kids in crisis and building strong families would not be possible without the generosity of our loyal donors. They play an integral role in ensuring that we are able to open our doors to vulnerable children for years to come.


Each year, CEDARS pays tribute to our friends who have made significant contributions to the children of CEDARS through the years. They are honored here as Lifetime Benefactors.


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Lincoln Public Schools		Woods Charitable Fund

CEDARS Home for Children Foundation exists to raise funds in support of CEDARS mission to help children who have been abused, neglected and homeless achieve safety, stability and enduring family relationships.

The Foundation works with donors both locally and across the nation to support the 3,000 children who receive care from CEDARS each year. Donor support comes through a variety of means including annual giving, special events, major project support and planned gifts.

The CEDARS Home for Children Foundation is committed to the highest quality stewardship of the gifts given to its donors. Ninety percent of every dollar raised is used to meet the direct needs of children through CEDARS programs.

Our special **CIRCLE OF LIFE** donors of distinction lay the groundwork for future generations by leaving a lasting legacy that will live on in perpetuity. These individuals have planned a gift to ensure that CEDARS will always be here to provide care to children in need. Charitable Gift Annuitants are distinguished here with an asterisk (*).

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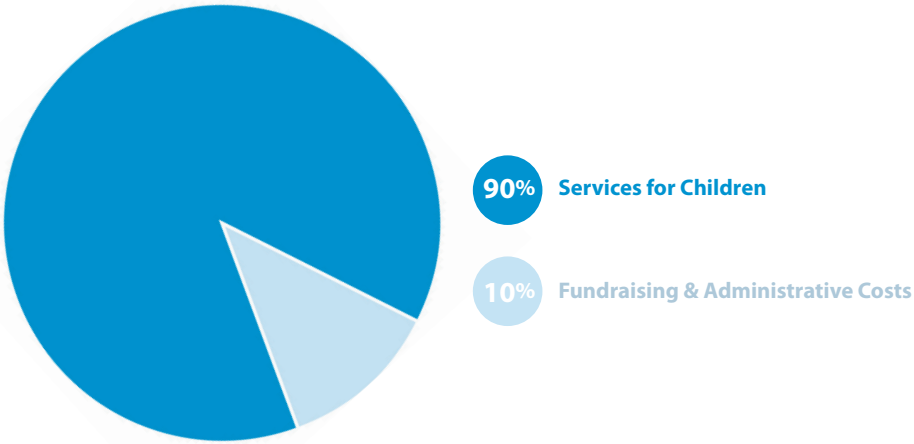
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John Goldrich	Melissa Newton, Chairperson	Philip M. Young

An Organization You Can Trust

CEDARS is...

- ☐ a safe place where children are welcomed night or day
- ☐ a provider of care for 3,000 children each year
- ☐ a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization
- ☐ a partner of the United Way

In the last fiscal year CEDARS consolidated agencies spent 90% of all expenditures on services for children. Percentages are based on the formula set forth by the Better Business Bureau’s Wise Giving Alliance, whose standard recommends at least 65% of an organization’s total expenses be spent on program activities.



CEDARS is accredited through the Council on Accreditation and the National Association for the Education of Young Children. CEDARS is an “A” rated charity with the American Institute of Philanthropy and has received numerous awards for excellent business practices from the Better Business Bureau.





Helping Kids in Crisis. Building Strong Families.

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