



Celebrating Our
F.I.T.S. Approach,
GROUNDED IN
YOUR SUPPORT



THE CENTER FOR
YOUTH & FAMILY
SOLUTIONS
cyfsolutions.org

— ANNUAL REPORT 2023 —

A Letter from the President



This was a significant year for The Center for Youth and Family Solutions (CYFS). Co-founders Trish Fox (who was the agency's Executive Director) as well as Tony Riordan (its Chief Operating Officer) both moved into retirement. Together, their extraordinary contributions and unwavering commitment to the mission of promoting dignity, compassion, and respect along with the belief that change is possible have left a permanent mark on our organization and the countless lives we touch. The innovative programs they both championed have not only addressed immediate needs, but have laid the groundwork for lasting positive change, reflecting our agency's belief in the potential for human transformation.

While their legacy of compassion will endure and the positive ripple effect will continue to spread throughout CYFS, we were also fortunate to bring in Patrick Phelan, former CEO of Sinnissippi Centers, as our new CEO. Patrick's visionary leadership further infuses a culture of empathy and understanding and fosters an environment where individuals and families can find hope, solace, and support.

Throughout this FY 23 Annual Report, we share the framework for success envisioned by our co-founders and the outcomes of the groundwork they laid. Our family-centered, inclusive, trauma-responsive, and strength-based approach to our work - or what we call F.I.T.S.- has helped over 18,000 people who were experiencing significant life challenges, heal, cope, and thrive. You will see examples of these pillars in practice and how they support human transformation.

Last but certainly not least, I want to impress upon you how none of the work we accomplished this past year could have happened without your support. From all of us at CYFS, we want to thank you for believing in the enduring strength of the human and community spirit and being a part of the solution. Together, we truly are transforming lives!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie A. Hohulin".

Julie Hohulin, Board President

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

CYFS PROGRAMS HAVE
HELPED OVER **18,000**
PEOPLE HEAL, COPE,
AND THRIVE.

Last year, we helped over 18,000 people heal from life-changing trauma, abuse and neglect, and other significant challenges.



Strong families build stronger and healthier communities and contribute to overall wellbeing. CYFS helped 9,000 families restore a sense of hope, be well, and thrive.



CYFS HELPED NEARLY
9,000 FAMILIES
ACHIEVE SOLUTIONS
TOGETHER.

ADOPTION



With integrity, dignity, and compassion, our Adoption program matched **164** children — infants, toddlers, sibling groups, and teens — with loving forever families.

“My Adoption Specialist always answered my questions right away through the process and gave me encouragement and strength through it all.”

Adoptive parent who gave a child the gift of a forever family

YOUTH, FAMILY, & COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES

Our **YOUTH, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES** (YFCOS) helps stabilize children, teens, and families in crisis with prevention, diversion, and intervention services.

Our services reached **1,275** children and adults during the year—stabilizing families in crisis, preventing young people from involvement in delinquent activities, and bringing about lasting change in families by successfully diverting teens from further involvement in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems.

“Our caseworker helped me gain a greater understanding of the impact trauma has had on my child. She was always so friendly and understanding.”

Mother whose family was in crisis and received YFCOS services



GUARDIAN ANGEL RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

GUARDIAN ANGEL HOME in Morton offers young boys aged 6-12 an opportunity to heal from significant trauma, abuse, and neglect all while learning new coping skills so they can thrive.

100% of the boys served felt their caseworker was a voice for their needs and that they felt safe at Guardian Angel Home.



NEW DAY SENIOR SERVICES

CYFS provides in-home counseling, volunteer companion services, training, and outreach to isolated older adults coping with depression, grief, loss, and loneliness.

“I don’t know what I’d do without her. After I see her I feel grounded.”
New Day Senior Services client



97% of clients served by these programs last year continue to live independently and 100% of seniors in our community outreach programs learned new skills that contributed to better physical and mental health.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES



Last year, our Behavioral Health team provided nearly **30,500** hours of therapy to children, families, and individuals, helping them address the issues that were affecting their overall wellbeing.

With more people living with anxiety, depression, strained relationships, and other life challenges, CYFS is committed to improving access to behavioral health services in the **37** counties served. That is why we offer a sliding fee scale so that financial constraints do not become an obstacle to achieving solutions.

“My therapist went above and beyond. She carefully listened to me, and then offered ways that could make my situation better.”

Counseling client whose life has improved after therapy



Nearly **30,500** hours of therapy to children, families, and individuals

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SERVICES

Our **INTACT FAMILY SERVICES** program is designed to provide families with the linkages, support, and resources they need to make changes and prevent out-of-home foster care placement for their children. Our services helped **312** families strengthen their capacity to protect and care for their children and remain together.

When an abused or neglected child is referred to our Foster Care program, CYFS provides a safe and loving temporary home with relatives or licensed foster parents. We link parents to services that help them make the changes necessary to provide a safe and nurturing home for their children — such as domestic violence counseling, substance abuse treatment, housing, jobs, and in-home supports. **2,083** foster families provided safety, security, and support to **1,553** children in foster care.



“She has been great at helping me get my life back in order. I am becoming a better parent.”

Mother receiving Intact Family Services



MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Last year, CYFS provided a total of **43** interns with an enriched hands-on experience in the human service field with opportunities to perform clinical services, and case management support. We are proud to provide direct experiences that lay a critical foundation for the next generation of social workers and counselors. CYFS is also a proud partner with over 18 colleges and universities and offers internships in multiple areas of study.



Last year, our volunteers and interns provided **18,693** hours of compassionate service. Our volunteers tutored and mentored youth in care, visited isolated seniors and assisted with administrative tasks that help support the children and families we serve.



FAMILY-
SYSTEMS

INCLUSIVITY

TRAUMA-
RESPONSIVE

STRENGTHS-
BASED



CYFS ACHIEVES SOLUTIONS TOGETHER BY APPROACHING THOSE WE SERVE FROM A FAMILY-SYSTEMS, INCLUSIVE, TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE, AND STRENGTH-BASED PERSPECTIVE.

Here are some of the most impactful ways we have utilized each of these four pillars over the last year:

CYFS CO-FOUNDERS TRAIN LEADERS ON WHAT FAMILY SYSTEMS LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION

With each child, family, and individual we serve, we recognize their **family-system** is central to their development, identity, and relationships. We also recognize strengthening these systems is critical in creating lasting change. While all four of our pillars of practice are critical, approaching our clients

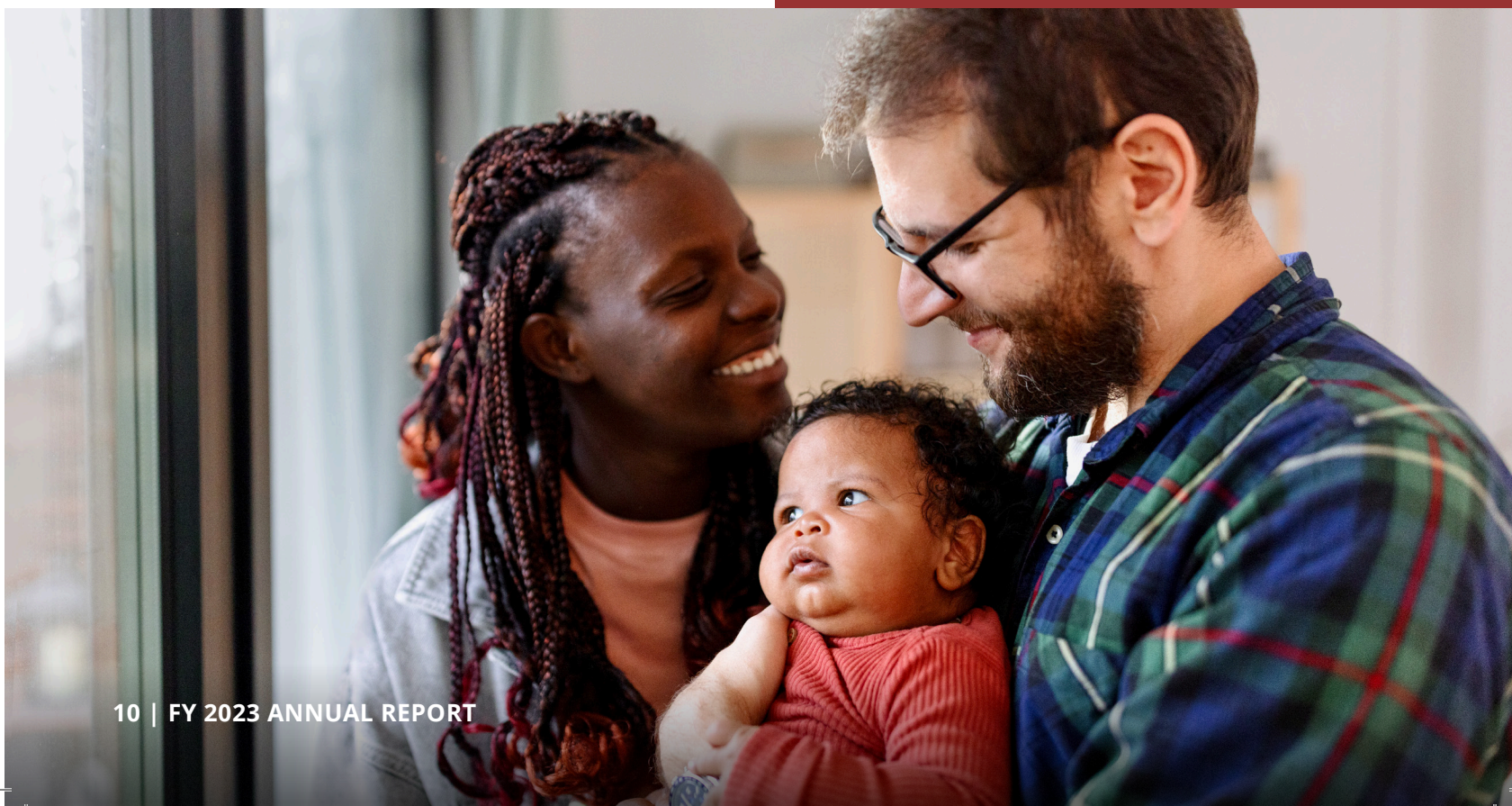
from a family-centered perspective is our bedrock. To set the stage for how critical the family-system approach is to our work, our agency co-founders Trish Fox and Tony Riordan facilitated the first training to direct service supervisors. From there, Behavioral Health leadership partnered with our Training Specialists to deliver training to all staff at every site- no matter their role. Over the last year, over **90%** of all employees have been given innovative tools to utilize family-systems in their work.

ADDRESSING RACIAL DISPARITIES IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

As part of our commitment to **inclusivity**, we embrace the distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives of everyone, and actively work to remove systemic barriers, challenge inequities, and ensure equal access to resources and opportunities. Over the last year, our **Continuous Quality Improvement** and **Child Welfare** leaders participated in a workgroup with The Illinois Collaboration on Youth (ICOY) called, “Our Side of the Street.” This group was tasked with taking a deep dive into racial disparities within the Illinois foster care system. Throughout the state of Illinois, there is a disproportionate amount of Black youth in care, compared to the local census population. Our CQI and Child Welfare leadership are working towards developing action steps for future change. One area is advocating for more objective language that describes a family’s circumstances to avoid



language that carries subjective meaning and could influence whether a child goes into care. We look forward to reporting back on what other action steps are developed to address racial disparities in the foster care system.



UTILIZING TRANSFORMATIVE TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE APPROACHES WITH SEVERELY ABUSED CHILDREN

As leaders in **trauma-responsive** care, we recognize that often behaviors are the result of traumatic experiences, and we promote healing and recovery by integrating progressive interventions—like the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT)—into our work. Our certified NMT clinicians are trained in completing a “brain map” assessment which provides information on how well a child is functioning, and a treatment plan is developed to meet the child’s needs. This has been especially impactful with the boys we serve at our Guardian Angel Home, who have experienced significant trauma and require **24/7** support. By combining the specialized treatment plan, including personalized ‘self-regulation’ bins that contain items to help each boy calm down when they get escalated, we have seen



a decrease in the number of restrictive actions our Guardian Angel team has had to enact.

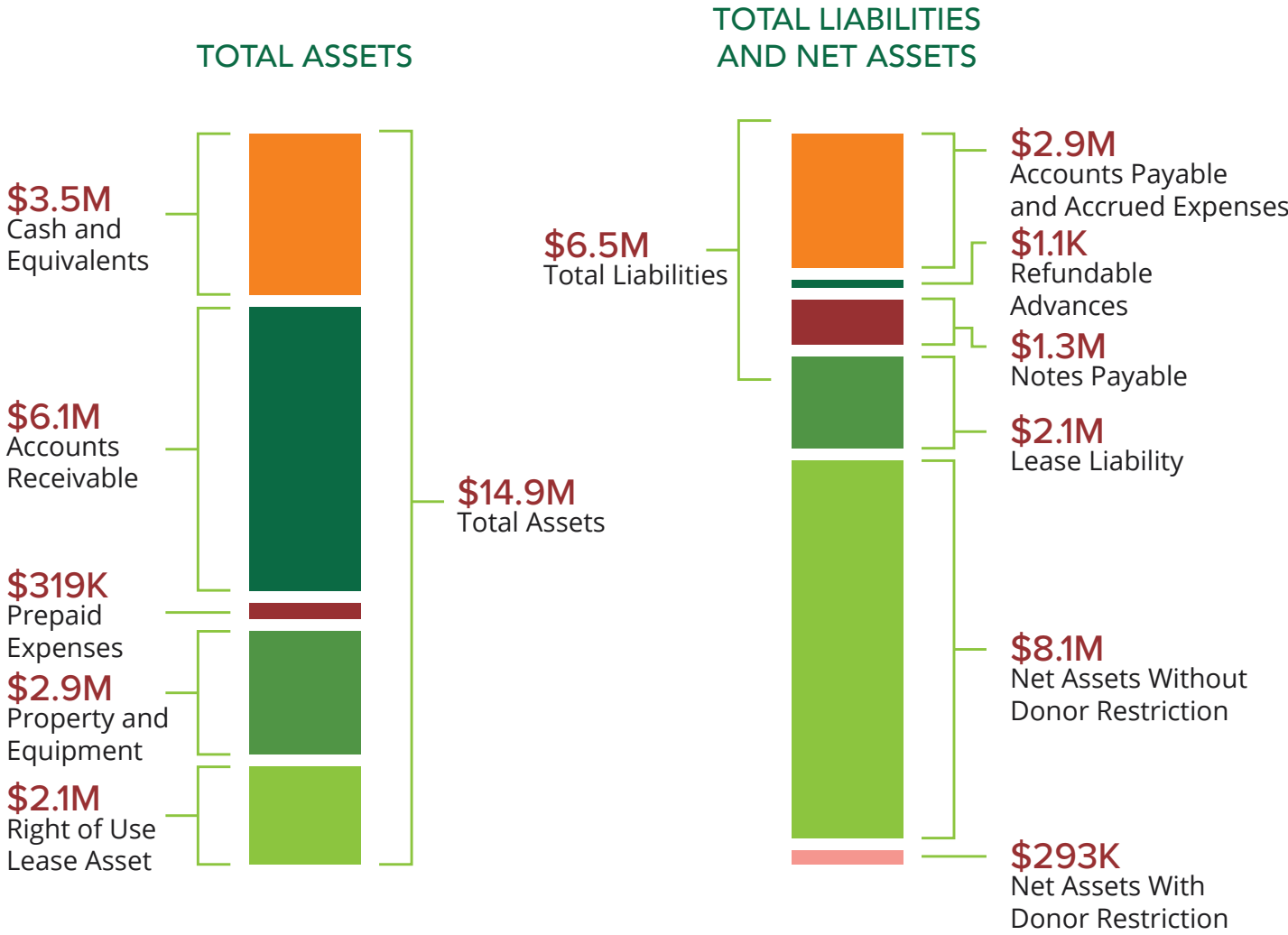
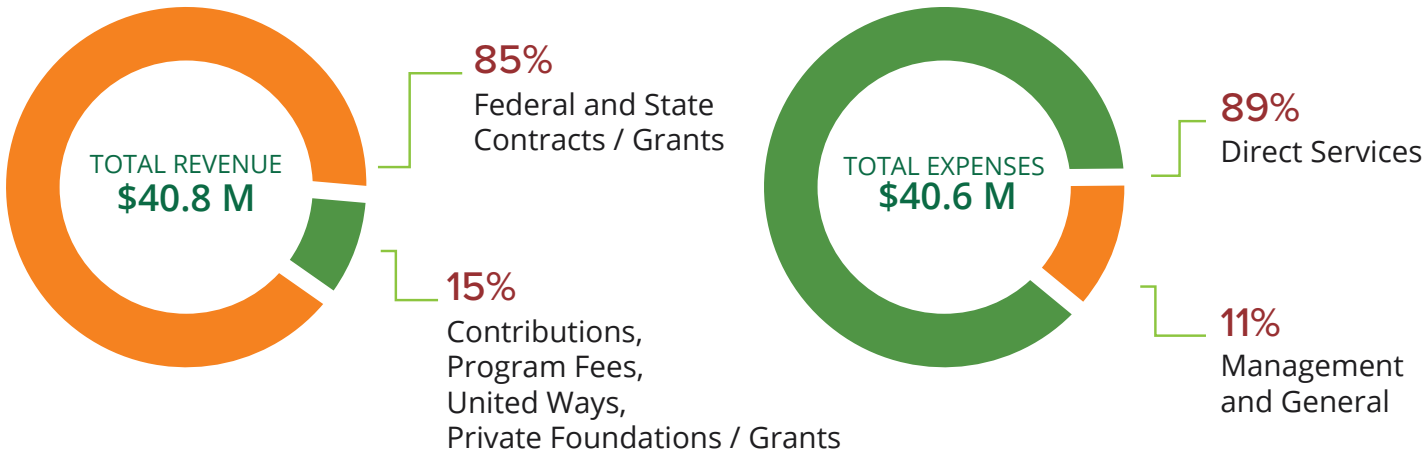
CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM IS A STATE LEADER IN REUNIFYING FAMILIES

When we apply a **strength-based** approach, we affirm that every person has inherent worth. Moreover, when we help identify strengths it empowers all involved to see potential solutions. This approach is critical in all our programs, but in our child abuse prevention and intervention services, it is the foundation of our practice. Our goal is to make certain every child we serve is with adults who provide a safe, stable, and secure family. We do this through successful reunification, adoption, and guardianship. Last year, we

ensured **357** children found a permanent, safe, and loving forever family with adults they trust to care for them for a lifetime. **57%** of those were reunifying families. When you believe change is possible, build upon individuals’ strengths and provide linkages to services, people can heal, cope, and thrive.



FY 23 FINANCIAL POSITION



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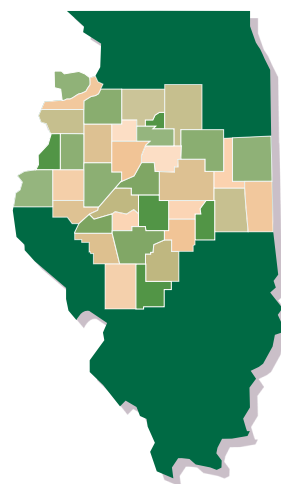


Get Involved

Volunteering is a way to share your gifts, gain experience, and give back to your community. Our volunteers make a difference everyday in the lives of our clients. Find out about volunteer opportunities at cyfsolutions.org/get-involved/volunteer or call **309.323.6600**.

Make a Difference for Life.

Become a Foster Parent with CYFS. Thousands of children in Illinois need a stable, consistent, and loving place to call home. When you become a foster parent, you are fostering a future. Start your journey today by calling **Liz Sekowski** at **309.820.7616** or emailing esekowski@cyfsolutions.org.



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