

CAMBRIDGE FAMILY &
CHILDREN'S SERVICE

2015 Annual Report





DEAR FRIENDS,

For the past seven years I have had the distinct honor of serving as the executive director of Cambridge Family and Children's Service. CFCS is one of a handful of the Commonwealth's legacy human service agencies—a small number of agencies who began serving children and families in the period after the civil war when no public services were available—and continues to provide services 142 years later. In October, I left CFCS to assume the position of the Child Advocate for the Commonwealth. In this final report I wanted to share why I believe that CFCS deserves your support.

What makes CFCS so special? The organization's focus on the well-being of every client and the commitment to help each child and family to achieve the best possible outcomes is the underpinning of its reputation for excellence. Countless numbers of clients could describe the difference that a CFCS worker made in their life. Children and youth who have experienced multiple placements find refuge in a CFCS foster or group home. They feel the difference—they know that the staff really cares and that these are professionals who want to engage them to develop a plan that will meet their unique needs.

I cannot remember a week when I was not moved to tears by a story of the extraordinary lengths to which a CFCS social worker went in support of a client. Colleagues were amazed at the robust quality assurance systems that we implemented to ensure that nothing was overlooked.

CFCS is fortunate to be governed by an exceptional Board of Directors. Their commitment of time and talents is unparalleled. I know that they will hire a successor who will carry on the tradition of excellence and innovation for which CFCS is known.

CFCS is also privileged to have the support of all of you. From those early days of the first orphanage on Avon Hill, the Cambridge community has provided the funds needed to provide the high touch level of services that our families need in order to thrive. Our families benefit from the clothing, school supplies, blankets, summer camp and other recreational and enrichment opportunities that your gifts provide. I hope that we can continue to rely on your commitment to our work.

My years at CFCS have been among the most professionally rewarding of my career. I will always hold the CFCS family close to my heart. Thank you for welcoming me into this amazing community.

All my best,



Maria Z. Mossaides
Executive Director



WHO WE SERVE

Cambridge Family and Children's Service (CFCS) believes that every child should be raised in a loving family that will provide a lifetime of support. CFCS provides a continuum of services to strengthen families to ensure that children can be raised safely in their home. The children we serve have been or are at risk of being removed from their families due to abuse, neglect, behavioral needs or developmental disabilities.

Our clients represent a wide diversity of ethnicities, races, ages, religions, and beliefs. The majority of our clients live in Cambridge, Boston, Somerville, Malden, Medford and other nearby communities.

Agency Highlights

Our fiscal Year 2015—July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015—was a very ambitious and challenging year for Cambridge Family and Children's Service (CFCS). We continued to provide exceptional service to our clients, achieving remarkable successes, while faced with the implementation of multiple changes in contract requirements and licensing standards, as well as the negative impact resulting from highly publicized tragedies concerning children in State care.

At CFCS, our families and youth continue to be at the center of all our efforts. Our programs are strengths-based, holistic, inclusive and empowering. We partner with our families and youth to ensure their full participation in all decision-making.

Our Vision, Values and Beliefs

All programming at CFCS is based on the concept of permanency.

Our vision is a world in which all children are able to reach their full potential.

We believe that children deserve to live and grow within a family—if not with their birth family, then with one that will embrace them and make a permanent, life-long commitment to love and care for them.

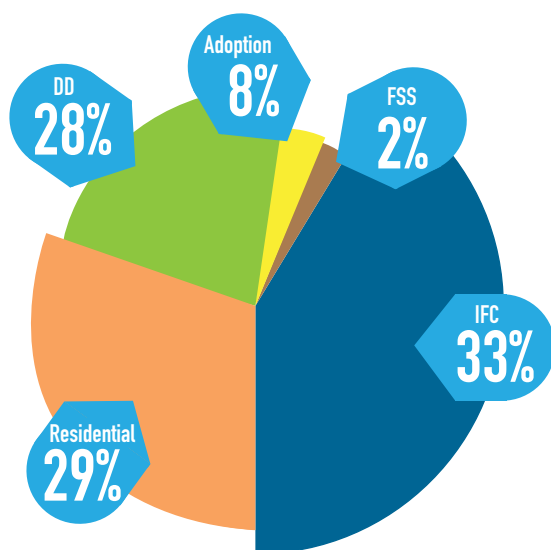
Our goal is to ensure that every child develops a sense of belonging and the continuity of family connections to support and sustain them throughout their lives.

Our focus is to provide support to children who have been or are at risk of being removed from their families due to abuse, neglect, behavioral health needs or developmental disabilities.

We honor the extraordinary generosity of families who open their hearts and their homes to children in need.

We work to nurture and support strong healthy families, in the context of strong, healthy communities.

Resource Allocation



IFC=Intensive Foster Care
DD=Developmental Disabilities
FSS=Family Support & Stabilization





ADOPTION SERVICES

It was an exciting year for the Adoption Program. Twenty-two children were referred to the program for adoption case management services, up significantly from the previous two years in which eleven and four children were referred, respectively. Seven children achieved legal permanency through adoption including two sets of siblings, one child through legal guardianship with relatives and six children were placed with their pre-adoptive families and are awaiting finalization of their adoptions in 2016.

Sibling Groups

We have remained focused on doing whatever it takes to help siblings grow up together. While keeping brothers and sisters together is more challenging than separating children, requiring a greater investment of time and support, we have maintained our strong commitment to keeping siblings together whenever possible.

Waiting Families

In addition to our work with waiting children, we have successfully trained, home-studied, and matched many adoptive families with waiting children this year. Nineteen families—38 individuals—completed training during the year. Enrollment for all training sessions were at or near capacity. Nineteen families were approved as adoptive parents, thirteen of them accepted placements, with several more transitioning children to their homes.

Search and Reunion Services

We continued our Search and Reunion Services in an effort to provide greater assistance to birth parents or people who are attempting to find members of their original families. New forms and policies were piloted and refined and we look forward to fully operationalizing these services with the addition of an online search tool.

Preferred Adoption Provider

The CFCS adoption program has remained a preferred provider of adoption services statewide. The number of referrals to the agency has expanded. CFCS was asked to provide informal guidance and explanation of adoption contract practices by the Commonwealth. We remain proud of our reputation as a provider of exceptional adoption services.



81 children
in
43 families served

FAMILY SUPPORT AND STABILIZATION

The CFCS Family Support and Stabilization (FSS) program provides both In-Home family support as well as Supervised Visitation services. The FSS team has multi-lingual capacity and serves families across Greater Boston. For In-Home services, we work closely with parents and children to find creative solutions to problems, to aid in resolving conflict and to promote a safe, stable home life. Through twice weekly face-to-face, intensive clinical support, parent support, conflict resolution and behavior management, FSS assists parents navigating other systems such as school, and provides information and referral for connections to long-term community resources and supports.

Through Supervised Visitation, we ensure that children in foster or kinship placement have safe, monitored contact with their biological parents. We provide transportation, monitor the safety of the children during visits and provide factual, weekly visit reports to the Department of Children and Families.

“My Social Worker Listens to Me”

A single mother of five children under 13 years old was referred for services after leaving a relationship of domestic violence and moving to a homeless shelter. At the time, she was driving all five children over an hour to school each day. The children, struggling with life in a shelter, were exhibiting concerning behaviors and not following rules set by their mother, which placed the family in jeopardy of losing their shelter placement. The mom had to quit her job due to the numerous times she was called to the children’s schools.

With twice weekly meetings with FSS staff, the mother began to feel more comfortable setting rules and expectations and following through with rewards or consequences. The children began to express themselves more appropriately and there were positive, facilitated family meetings. With the positive changes, the children finished out the school year with good grades and the mom was able to get a new job, access more resources for her family, and move the family to their own apartment.



81 referrals completed
76 families served

575 Individuals
served in
215 families

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Through contracts with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), CFCS provides intensive support services to individuals and their families to help them remain in their homes and communities. Staff provide information, referral and guidance in child development, behavioral support, parenting support, and special needs and community support to these families.

CFCS is also the DDS Family Support Center for the Charles River West Area (Cambridge, Somerville, Waltham, Watertown and Belmont) providing a variety of supports to families including a resource reading library, home visits, skill-building and family activities. Through the Specialized Home Care Program, we provide case management and support services for developmentally disabled adults who are unable to live in their own homes.

During the year, more than 248 contacts with the Family Support Center provided information and referrals, and case managers assisted more than 165 clients with services such as arranging for out-of-home care for an adult with elderly parents, and attending school and medical appointments.

Training workshops were held at CFCS covering topics such as guardianship and Individualized Education Plans, and the Family Support Center held fourteen special events for clients. The Adult Social Group met monthly and continued to grow in membership. Social activities were combined with skill-building activities, community outings, and travel training.

47%
were referrals
for same-day placement

INTENSIVE FOSTER CARE

Intensive Foster Care (IFC) provides transitional, therapeutic foster care for children referred by the Department of Children and Families. The IFC team of foster parents and social workers provides specialized, around-the-clock support and guidance for the children placed in the program. Through this collaborative effort, IFC supports the child's successful transition into a permanent placement: reunification with their birth family, guardianship, kinship care, adoption, or independent living.

Over the last year, as families and children continued to struggle with reduced community-based resources, an increase in substance abuse, violence in our communities, and other crises in the child welfare community, there was an unprecedented strain on our staff, foster parents, and the youth we serve.

There was a 47% increase in referrals, more than half of which were emergency or same-day placements, as well as a new, complex, and nuanced placement process.

The CFCS program staff worked to address this impact by providing additional supports to the children and families in our IFC program including targeted trainings and problem-solving groups for parents, more advocacy on behalf of children in foster care, and more respite care for foster parents.

CFCS reviewed and redesigned tracking protocols to ensure that information on children and foster parents is consistent and reliable. The system produced management reports highlighting visits, training hours, outcomes, and academic achievement.

Recruitment and Retention

The recruitment of new foster families is ongoing throughout the year with staff participating in community-based events. The addition of online and social media created an awareness of the need to open more homes to children in need of placement.

There was a focus on the retention of current foster parents with more family-focused events, foster parent involvement in the program, and feedback and support. A majority of new foster parents are referred by current foster parents.

Academic Achievement

Typically, youth placed in foster care are behind academically, sometimes losing months of learning through the transition. In the CFCS foster care program, the youth attend school regularly and have made strides in their achievement: two graduated from high school, two enrolled in college, and one won an award for "Most Improved Student" and had perfect attendance. Most progressed to the next grade and passed the MCAS.





RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS FOR ADOLESCENTS

Putnam Place and Teens Learning Choices (TLC) are group homes for youth aged 16-21 that provide a range of services and supports to assist in the transition to successful adulthood. Residents live in a diverse community where they are valued and given personalized attention according to their needs and abilities. The program provides a healthy space to develop confidence and become contributing members of the community. There is an emphasis on lifelong connections to supportive family members and friends, education, vocational skills, and personal responsibility.

The year saw an increase in the level of acuity of involved youth and a therapeutic model of strengths-based interventions was employed to create a healing environment.

Curriculum-based

An eight-week curriculum was presented to help the teens build a positive self-image including topics such as professional development, building self-esteem and confidence, dressing for success, and dining etiquette. For the last class, they were given a budget to buy appropriate dress for an evening out where they celebrated and put their newly acquired skills into practice.

Pathways/Life Skills

The Pathways/Life Skills program complements the residential programs, serving as a tangible extension of services that drive toward specific, long-term outcomes for young adults. Based on research and best practice in the field and guided by a program logic model that is definitive and realistic, the program establishes specific, measurable long-term goals for participants. These are: to develop a transition plan that includes resources and tasks necessary to achieve specific vocational and life goals that are identified by the individual, weekly individual meetings with the Life Skills Case Manager, weekly group programs on subjects necessary to live a healthy and successful life, and creating a portfolio that includes legal documents, certificates and diplomas, writing samples, a bank account, and other resource information.

Transition to Independent Living

A highlight over the past year was seeing a former resident of TLC transition to independent living and become a mentor to her former housemates. She completed her first year of community college and found summer employment, then returned to TLC to speak with the other residents to provide encouragement and guidance. She has become an inspirational leader.



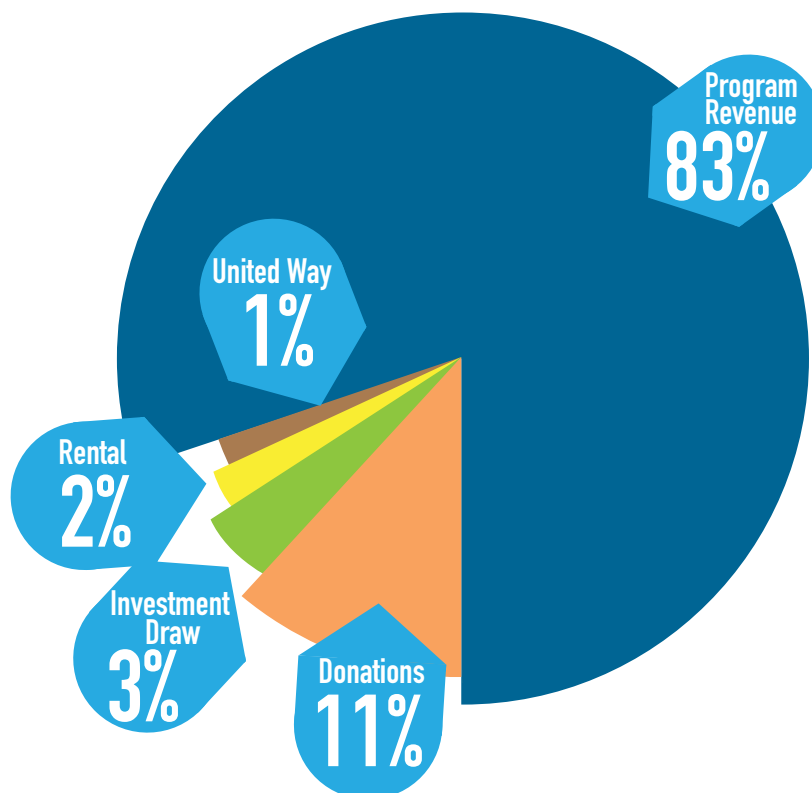
2015 Financials

Income & Expenses for the Year Ending June 30, 2015

Income	
Program Revenue	\$4,769,672
United Way of Massachusetts Bay	81,589
Investment Portfolio*	171,000
Private Donations**	648,874
Rental	110,223
Total Revenue	\$5,781,358
Expenses	
Program Expenses	\$4,698,400
General Operating	781,654
Fundraising	337,344
Rental Costs	123,313
Total Expenses	\$5,940,711

* The agency maintains funds in an investment portfolio with an annual draw down of 5% of the previous 3 years balance. An annual audit report is available upon request.

2015 Operating Support



2015 Report on Giving

Includes gifts received in CFCS Fiscal 2014: July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015. Sponsors of the 2015 Circle of Friends Gala are in bold.

\$20,000 and over

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