

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



*Yesterday. Today
& Tomorrow:*

150 YEARS OF
IMPACTING LIVES



MESSAGE FROM LCFS PRESIDENT & CEO

“Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning.” — Albert Einstein

In 2023, Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois (LCFS) celebrated our 150th anniversary of carrying out Christ’s work. Together we’ve helped so many children and families.

It’s been a journey from our beginnings as the German Evangelical Lutheran Orphan Home to the statewide child welfare agency LCFS is today. While many things have changed, our commitment to serving all God’s children has remained strong.

The impact on lives stretches well beyond those we’ve served. It includes their families (some for generations), our staff, supporters and communities. Thank you for being a part of that!

Some highlights from 2023 included:

- Continuing to lead the state in safely reuniting children in foster care with their families. LCFS’ role is to contribute not only to the well-being of the children, but also to the strength and resilience of the families involved. In the future, my hope is for LCFS to lead the way in re-imagining Illinois’ child welfare system into a child and family well-being system that provides supports to keep children safely with their parents and out of foster care.
- Launching LCFS’ newest preventative program - Best Start for Families – a parent learning group curriculum that teaches effective parenting techniques, communication strategies, and problem-solving skills, which strengthen and bring joy to family relationships. This program allows us to not only meet the needs of families in our foster care program, but also aligns with my goal of helping families in our local communities before things get bad.
- Celebrating and hearing from people whose lives have been impacted by LCFS throughout our history. It reminds all of us at LCFS why we do the work that we do every day - even when it’s challenging.

In this report, we reflect on LCFS’ past, how we are making an impact in the present and our hopes for the future. Thank you for being an important part of the circle of support for children and families ... yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Mike Bertrand, MSW, LCSW
President & CEO



MISSION
To nurture and strengthen children and families in need.

VISION
A world where all of God’s children have the opportunity for safe, healthy and meaningful lives.

LIVES IMPACTED IN 2023

6,388

children and individuals were welcomed to Camp Wartburg for camp, retreats or outdoor education



2,146

children were cared for in loving LCFS foster families

478

youth and families were supported through counseling services



441

youth in foster care found their permanent homes with **286** able to return to their families

254

families were strengthened through LCFS' family-focused preventative services



196

children found their forever families through adoption

44

youth in care received emergency shelter at Southern Thirty Adolescent Center



Yesterday. Today & Tomorrow: 150 YEARS OF IMPACT

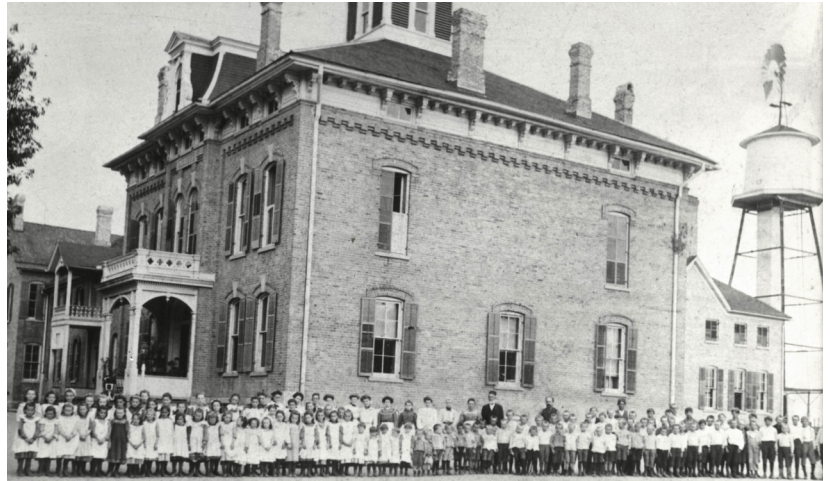
“Just as ripples spread out when a single pebble is dropped into the water, the actions of individuals can have a far-reaching effect.” — Dalai Lama

Yesterday

Beginning 150 years ago with six young children who needed a home to today serving thousands of vulnerable children and families each year, Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois (LCFS) has been committed to helping all of God’s children reach their full potential.

Today

Today, LCFS stands as one of the largest private child welfare agencies in Illinois. Through our everyday work, we strive to make a difference, one child and family at a time.



LCFS traces its roots back to the German Evangelical Lutheran Orphan Home in Addison, Illinois founded by 13 Lutheran congregations.

Thomas* and his wife Rachel never imagined that a simple question would change their lives so profoundly. It all began when a friend asked if they’d ever consider fostering. Intrigued and moved by the need, they decided to explore this possibility further.

They were then introduced to an eleven-year-old girl named Jenna. Jenna had endured a life marked by abuse and neglect, leaving her wary and mistrustful. Thomas and Rachel felt a tug at their hearts. They believed they had the patience and love to offer Jenna a stable home. After meeting her, they started the process of becoming her foster parents.

The transition wasn’t easy. Jenna, carrying the heavy burden of her past trauma, wasn’t always trusting and would have outbursts to test her new foster parents. LCFS supported the family during these times



and connected them with counseling and other services. Thomas and Rachel remained steadfast, always reassuring Jenna that, “No matter what you do, Mommy and Daddy are still going to love you.” Over time, she began to heal and believe in their unconditional love.

Six months into their foster care journey with Jenna, the couple received unexpected news: Jenna had a half-brother named Benjamin who had just been born. He was in the hospital, facing numerous severe

medical challenges, including a brain bleed, kidney issues, and a heart murmur. Without hesitation, Thomas and Rachel decided to foster him too, determined to keep the siblings together. Every day, they drove an hour to visit Benjamin in the hospital, praying for his recovery. Miraculously, two weeks later, Benjamin's condition improved significantly, and the family joyfully welcomed him home.

"When people tell me there's no God or no miracles, I have proof that there is one," Thomas shared, reflecting on Benjamin's recovery.

Their family continued to grow when they were asked to foster another half-sibling, Ellie. With each new child, Thomas and Rachel's commitment deepened. They continued to receive invaluable support from LCFS, especially from their dedicated licensing worker, Jessica. "She's been the lifesaver, the one who has helped us every step of the way," Rachel said. "I just appreciate her knowledge; she would communicate so clearly about the entire process."

Eventually, all three of the siblings were adopted and found their forever family with Thomas and Rachel.

Reflecting on their fostering journey, the couple shared, "Fostering is one of the hardest things you'll ever do... But it's also one of the most rewarding. Every kid deserves a family. There are so many kids who need homes. You shouldn't have to think about it twice. You should just do it. The need is there. The key ingredient, I believe, is love... just continue to love them."

Thomas and Rachel's story demonstrates that with faith, patience and unwavering love, children can heal and lives can be transformed.

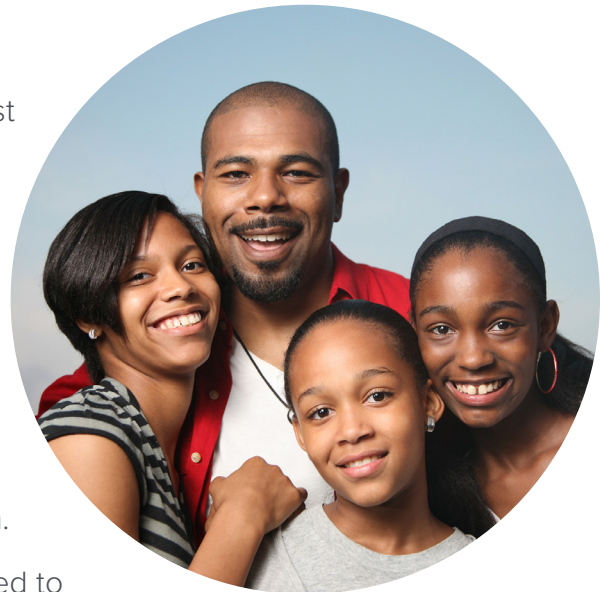
Tomorrow

What do you hope for the children in your lives? It's more than just meeting basic needs like food, clothing and shelter; it's about them having a bright future and everything they need to thrive.

Why should we wish for anything less for ALL children?

At the heart of LCFS' vision for the future is the belief that every child deserves to reach their full potential, regardless of their background or circumstance. By equipping communities with the resources and services they need to support families before a crisis, we're not only addressing immediate needs but also investing in the long-term success and well-becoming of children.

Thank you for being a part of LCFS' circle of support. You're invited to continue your partnership with us and help ensure that every child is nurtured, every family is strengthened and we build a brighter future for all.



**To protect privacy, the names and images of children and adults are representational only.*

Our Clients. Their Stories

Check out some of the stories from LCFS' 150 years of impacting lives and be inspired by people changing their lives for the better. Visit [LCFS.org](https://www.lcfs.org).



LCFS' CIRCLE OF SUPPORT FOR GENERATIONS

*"Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures."
— Psalm 119:90*



During the celebration of our anniversary in 2023, it became clear to me that our story is truly based on a 150 years of generosity. We talk a great deal about the circle of support that surrounds the children and families we serve. Our donors have been completing this circle for past generations and will continue to do so for generations to come. Helping a child and their family now can change the trajectory of their lives forever. What a powerful message of love and commitment our donors have been sending for 150 years!

Because of our donors, in 2023:

1,000

youth in care headed back to school with new backpacks



30+

families were helped through our Family Support/ Emergency Fund



In addition, many children were able to go to sport and band camps, have new beds, attend their first prom, have a week's worth of fun in the great outdoors at Camp Wartburg, and receive counseling services. The extras that each of us value for our own families have been made available to those in our care – making them feel special, cared for, and loved.

We cannot thank our donors enough for the true impact they have had on the lives of those we serve. With your support we will continue to be a place of hope and healing for families for generations to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheryl Wendt".

Cheryl Wendt
VP & Chief Development Officer

Platinum
Transparency
2023

Candid.

LCFS FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Consolidated statement of activities for fiscal year ended June 30, 2023

UNRESTRICTED REVENUE

Contributions, net	\$939,208
Legacies and bequests	\$600,490
Contributions by associated congregations	\$56,106
In-Kind Contributions	\$113,239
Fees and grants from government agencies	\$39,357,019
Other Revenue	
Program service fees	\$2,741,788
Program grants	\$334,979
Thrift shop income	\$412,344
Other Income	\$845,780
Release of net assets arising from satisfaction of restrictions	\$216,228
REVENUE FROM OPERATIONS	\$45,617,181

OPERATING EXPENSES

Program Services	\$37,424,202
Supporting Services*	\$7,352,925
Management and general	\$6,268,976
Fundraising	\$992,049
Investment Fund (Foundation)	\$91,900
OPERATING EXPENSES	\$44,777,127

Increase in unrestricted net assets before other changes in net assets	\$840,054
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TOTAL REVENUE

Revenue from Operations	\$45,617,181
Net Increase in donor restricted net assets	\$702,542
TOTAL REVENUE	\$46,319,723

OTHER CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

Net investment income	\$830,647
Gain on sale of property & equipment (Loss)	\$(138)
Components of net periodic benefit cost	\$134,332
Pension-related changes other than net periodic benefit cost	\$858,166
Increase in unrestricted net assets before other changes in net assets	\$840,054
Net Increase in donor restricted net assets	\$702,542
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS	\$3,365,603

NET ASSETS

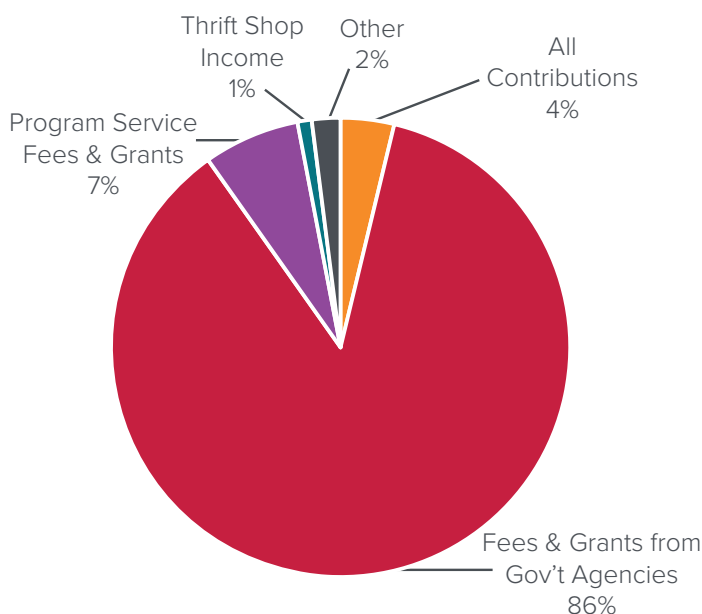
Beginning of year	\$20,212,216
END OF YEAR	\$23,577,819

*Supporting Services are 16% percent of total expenses.

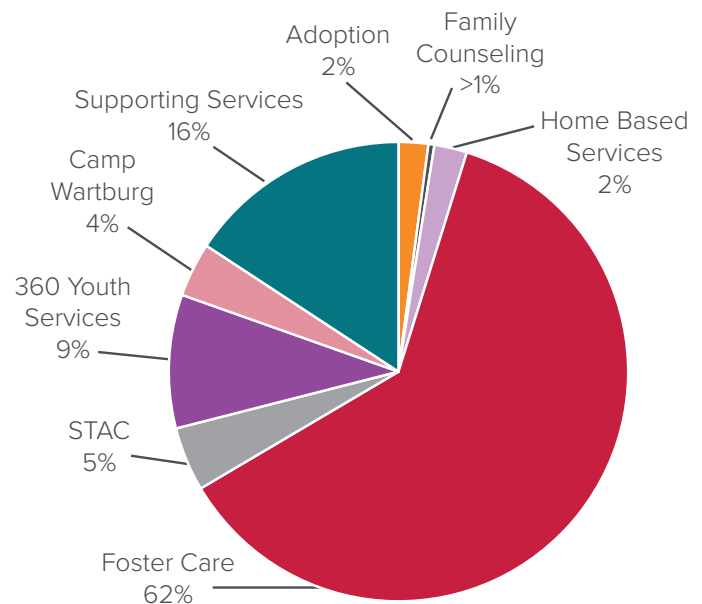
This financial statement was abstracted from the Organization's June 30, 2023 audited consolidated financial statements, which includes 360 Youth Services.

Copies of the audited consolidated financial statements are available upon written request to Dhiren Shah, LCFS VP and Chief Financial Officer, One Oakbrook Terrace, #501, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181, or available online at [LCFS.org/publications-financials](https://www.lcfs.org/publications-financials).

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?



WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?



LCFS LEADERSHIP IN 2023

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Beverly Jones, MSW, ACSW

VP & CHIEF STRATEGY & INNOVATIONS OFFICER / PRIVACY OFFICER

LaTasha Roberson-Guifarro, MSW, LCSW

VP & CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Dhiren Shah, CMA, CPA

VP & CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Cheryl Wendt

Historical images courtesy of the Addison Historical Society.



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