

LCFS ANNUAL REPORT

2024



OF ILLINOIS

BUILDING **BRIGHTER** FUTURES

MESSAGE FROM LCFS PRESIDENT & CEO

"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."
— Franklin D. Roosevelt



As I reflect on the past year, I am grateful for the incredible circle of support that surrounds our mission to nurture and strengthen children and families in need. Together, we have turned challenges into opportunities and made remarkable strides in helping those we serve build brighter futures.

Our theme, Building Brighter Futures, perfectly reflects both our achievements and the hope we continue to inspire. Thanks to your support, we have:

- **Expanded our Extended Family Support** program to reach additional counties, providing more families than ever with essential resources and guidance to create stable, nurturing environments and prevent children from entering foster care.
- **Introduced innovative initiatives** for our dedicated staff, equipping them with the tools, training, and support needed to continue delivering exceptional care.
- **Strengthened our foster care program**, ensuring that children receive the extra support they deserve, empowering foster families to provide safe, loving homes, and assisting birth families in their efforts to reunite with their children.

These are more than just accomplishments; they're steps toward real change in the lives of the children and families we serve. And none of it would have been possible without you.

As you go through this report, I hope you feel the same pride I do. Every success is a reflection of your generosity, compassion, and commitment to making a difference.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Here's to building even brighter futures in the years ahead for all of God's children!

With heartfelt thanks,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Bertrand".

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 2024

7,105

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



1,940

children were cared for in loving LCFS foster families



441

youth in foster care found their permanent homes with **241** able to return to their families



449

youth and families were supported through counseling services



243

families were strengthened through LCFS' family-focused preventative services



362

parents strengthened their family interactions through Best Start for Families



46

youth in care received emergency shelter at Southern Thirty Adolescent Center



74

children found their forever families through adoption



BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES: LCFS' Impact on Children and Families

*"A bright future beckons. The onus is on us, through hard work, honesty and integrity, to reach for the stars."
— Nelson Mandela*

At Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois (LCFS), we know real change doesn't happen overnight. It's not about quick fixes—it's about laying the foundation for a better future, one step at a time. Every day, we work to keep families together, help children heal, and provide the support needed to prevent crises before they happen. Because when families are stronger and kids are safe, the future shines brighter for everyone.

FOSTER CARE: A JOURNEY OF REUNITING A FAMILY

Emily*, a mom of three young boys, found herself in a tough situation when her children were placed in foster care due to domestic violence in the home. Like many parents in similar situations, she didn't trust the system or anyone connected to it. But she was at risk of losing her children permanently, which was a heartbreaking possibility.

However, things changed when she met her LCFS caseworker Amanda, who simply told her, "I'm here to help YOU." At first, Emily wasn't sure she believed that. But with time, she eventually saw Amanda as someone she could depend on. Emily received important services, like individual counseling and family therapy, which helped her and her children process their trauma and rebuild their bond.

After much hard work, Emily finally reached the point where she could begin the process of bringing her boys home, starting with overnight and weekend visits. But she needed more than just emotional support to make it happen. Without legal custody, she wasn't eligible for many public benefits, making it difficult to get supplies to prepare for their return. That's when people like you stepped up to help. LCFS' donor-funded Family Support/Emergency Fund, provided food, furniture, and essential items to help her create a safe and welcoming home. Thanks to these resources, Emily could focus on what mattered most: being ready for her boys to come home.

And they did.

Today, the boys are back home with their mother where they belong. Amanda continues to support Emily, serving as a steady presence during moments of anxiety and uncertainty. The transformation has been amazing. "The boys look like a weight has been lifted off their shoulders," Amanda shared. "I now see a smile on their faces that I've never seen before."



INTACT FAMILY RECOVERY: A SECOND CHANCE FOR A NEW BEGINNING

When Deanna* gave birth to her son, he was born substance-exposed. Deanna fell into addiction due to peer pressure from friends and her boyfriend ...and it nearly cost her everything. But instead of being separated from her baby, she was given an opportunity—one she refused to waste.

Through LCFS' Intact Family Recovery program, Deanna was able to keep custody of her son while getting the help she needed. With the support of her parents and LCFS caseworker Damikka, Deanna remained at home while receiving outpatient substance use treatment. LCFS also established child and family team meetings to ensure that Deanna's entire support system was engaged, helping her stay on track.

Deanna was blessed by this opportunity, saying, "I don't want to be like this anymore. It's time for me to grow up." Hearing her mother say how proud she was gave Deanna extra motivation to keep pushing forward.

Damikka also helped Deanna secure stable housing, and connected her with the resources needed to build a safe home for her son. Today, Deanna stands strong—clean, determined, and ready to embrace a brighter future. As she prepares to enroll her son in daycare and actively look for work, her journey is a powerful reminder that with the right support, commitment, and the courage to embrace a second chance, a new beginning is possible.



The Heart of It All: You

Stories like these wouldn't be possible without the kindness and generosity of people like you. No matter the program—foster care, preventative services, adoption, counseling, or more—your support directly impacts lives, turning despair into hope.

At LCFS, we believe in change. But more importantly, we believe in building it—together. With every child who finds a safe and loving home, with every parent who overcomes adversity, and with every family that stays together against the odds, we are shaping a future where every child and family has the chance to thrive.

Thank you for standing with us, for believing in brighter futures, and for being the reason so many families get a second chance.

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

OUR CLIENTS. THEIR STORIES.

Want to be inspired by more stories of people changing their lives for the better with the help of your support and LCFS? Visit [LCFS.org](https://www.lcfs.org)

BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

"For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building." — 1 Corinthians 3:9



At a recent conference I attended, the speaker gave the challenge to work like you are building a cathedral, which I found to be quite inspirational. You see – cathedrals used to take hundreds of years to build – and the original architects and builders never lived to see their vision come to completion. Or even knew the people who would be able to worship there.

But they still started the foundation and believed in their dream.

I truly believe our donors are cathedral builders! Your support of children and families when they need it most mirrors the faith of the builders long ago. You are investing in something you may never see completed in your lifetime – or even know the people whose lives you touch.

But you still help start the foundation for the children in our care. Your gifts of time, talent or treasure can change the trajectory of a child's life and a family's future.

Thank you to all of our supporters over the past year. As we look ahead - together we can continue to build cathedrals!

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

Cheryl Wendt, CFRE
VP & Chief Development Officer

83

cents out of every dollar went directly to programs and clients



1,000+

youth in care went back to school with new backpacks and school supplies

56

foster children were able to enjoy the beauty of God's creation at Camp Wartburg



Donors supported new bed purchases, Christmas gifts, sport and band camps, specialized dental care and more for the children we serve.

LCFS FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Consolidated statement of activities for fiscal year ended June 30, 2024

REVENUE

Contributions (including in-kind)	\$1,612,482
Legacies and bequests	\$11,343
Fees and grants from government agencies	\$44,386,137
Other Revenue	
Program service fees	\$1,780,649
Program grants	\$1,230,102
Thrift shop income	\$400,275
Other Income	\$203,472
TOTAL REVENUE	\$49,624,460

EXPENSES

Program Services	\$41,951,455
Supporting Services*	\$8,793,208
EXPENSES	\$50,744,663
Net operating loss	<u>\$(1,120,203)</u>

*Supporting Services includes Management & General and Fundraising expenses.

OTHER CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

Net investment income	\$1,442,731
Gain on sale of property & equipment (Loss)	\$(9,766)
Defined Pension Benefit Cost	\$(359,956)
Net operating loss	<u>\$(1,120,203)</u>
NET SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$(47,194)

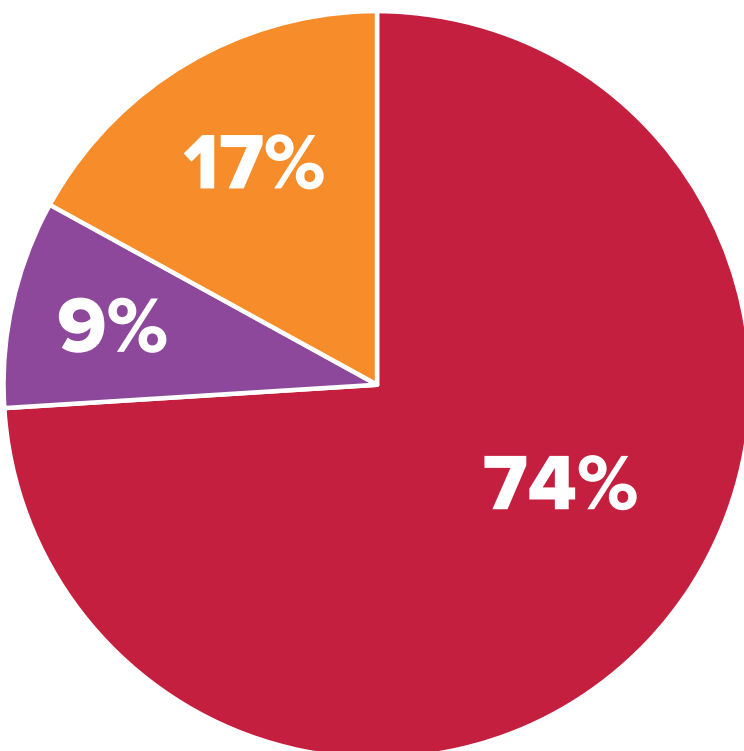
NET ASSETS

Beginning of year	\$23,577,819
END OF YEAR NET ASSETS	<u>\$23,530,625</u>

This financial statement was abstracted from the Organization's June 30, 2024 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).

HOW WE SPEND EACH DOLLAR



Children and Family Services

- Foster Care
- Camp Wartburg
- STAC
- Adoption
- Cornerstone Group Home
- Counseling

Preventative Services

- 360 Youth Services
- Best Start for Families
- Extended Family Support
- Intact Family Recovery

Supporting Services

LCFS LEADERSHIP IN 2024

2024 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chair

Brenna Woodley

Vice Chairs

Laurie Erickson
Anthony T. Stephens
Gretchen Winter

Secretary

Tracy Stockard

Treasurer

Melvin Faulkner

Members

Rev. Dr. Paul E. Bacon
Mike Bertrand
Robert Blackwell
Rev. Jeffrey P. Howell
Mandy Lesko
Bruce Meier
Tamela Milan-Alexander
Christine Peggau
Wayne Price

Honorary Members

Carolyn Becker
Marian Fick

2024 FOUNDATION BOARD

Chair

Bruce Meier

Vice Chair

Marian E. Fick

Secretary

David Walz

VP & CFO

Dhiren Shah

Trustees

Mike Bertrand
Melvin Faulkner
Beverly Jones
Jon K. Jurva
Ralph A. Morris
Paul L. Rehmer
Anthony T. Stephens
Gene L. Svebakken

Honorary Members

David Hardt
Dorothy Hildebrandt

2024 CORPORATE OFFICERS

President & CEO

Mike Bertrand, MSW, LCSW

VP & Chief Operating Officer

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, CFRE



Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois

One Oakbrook Terrace, Suite 501
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181
800-363-LCFS | LCFS.org
License number: 012998

