



# COMPASSION in ACTION 2023

KIDS CENTRAL, INC.



ANNUAL REPORT

# 2023 AT A GLANCE

## CONTRACTED AGENCIES

### CASE MANAGEMENT, ADOPTION & SUPERVISED VISITATION SERVICES

- LifeStream Behavioral Center — *Lake & Sumter Counties*
- Lutheran Services Florida — *Lake & Sumter Counties*
- Youth and Family Alternatives — *Citrus & Hernando Counties*

### GROUP CARE PROVIDERS & EMERGENCY SHELTERS

- Arnette House
- Arnette House Group Home
- Aspire Health Partners — *Oasis*
- Boys Town Central
- Boys Town North
- Children's Home Network
- The Children's Place at Homesafe, Inc.
- Covenant Children's Home
- Crossroads Hope Academy
- Eckerd Youth Alternatives — *Camp E-Nini-Hassee*
- Florida Baptist Children's Home
- Florida United Methodist Children's Home, Inc.
- Hands of Mercy
- Heart of Florida Youth Ranch
- Integrity Care, Inc.
- LifeStream — *Youth Recovery Care Center*
- LifeStream Behavioral Center — *Our Turning Point Ranch*
- Press Forward
- St. Augustine Youth Services, Inc.
- Twin Oaks Juvenile Development — *Waypoint RGH, Twin Oaks Emergency Center, and Harriet's Haven*
- Youth and Family Alternatives — *New Beginnings*
- Well Florida Council

### INTENSIVE IN-HOME COUNSELING

- Camelot Community Care

### PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

- GOLD & Associates, Inc. — *Marketing*
- Mindshare Technology — *Dashboard Design*
- David DeStefano — *Chief of Strategy/Consultant*
- Speakwrite — *Transcription Service*
- Press Forward Inc. — *Youth Development & Enrichment Program*
- National Youth Advocate Program (NYAP) — *In-Home Stabilization*

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION • FY 2023

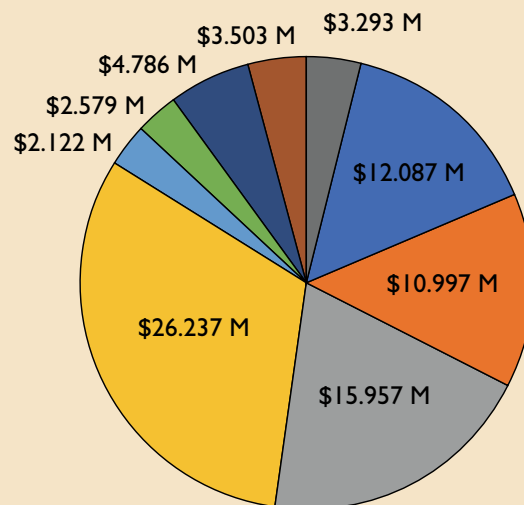
### REVENUES

• CBC Lead Agency	\$77,557,004
• Healthy Start & MIECHV	\$2,725,741
• CBC Integrated Health	\$532,298
• Donations & Interest	\$221,471
• Other Grants & Revenues	\$885,460



**96¢** of Every Dollar  
Directly Goes  
to the Programs

### EXPENSES



<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Foster Care	<span style="color: green;">■</span> Independent Living
<span style="color: orange;">■</span> Residential Group Care	<span style="color: darkblue;">■</span> Diversion & Prevention
<span style="color: grey;">■</span> Adoption	<span style="color: brown;">■</span> Other Grants
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Case Management	<span style="color: darkgrey;">■</span> Administrative
<span style="color: lightblue;">■</span> Recruitment & Licensing	

Visit our website to view the audited financial statements at [www.KidsCentralInc.org](http://www.KidsCentralInc.org).



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# KIDS CENTRAL



JOHN COOPER

Chief Executive Officer

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Compassion weaves a thread that binds us together in empathy and understanding. At Kids Central, our commitment to compassion is not just a philosophy but a guiding force that propels us forward each day. As we reflect on the past year, we invite you to embark on a journey with us—a journey of compassion in action.

From the moment a child finds comfort in the arms of a foster family to the reunification of a parent and child, each narrative is a demonstration to the power of compassion to transform lives. Behind every success story lies a network of dedicated employees, foster and adoptive parents, relative caregivers, partners, stakeholders, and supporters. Together, we form a united front, working tirelessly to ensure that every child in our care receives the love, support, and resources they deserve.

As we look to the future, our compassion remains unwavering. In the face of ongoing challenges and uncertainties, we are guided by our commitment to serve each child and family in our system of care compassionately. Together, we will continue to move forward, creating brighter tomorrows for the children and families we serve.



Lance Kinney

LANCE KINNEY

Board Chairman

## A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

As we reflect on the accomplishments of the past year, it is with great pride and gratitude that I share with you the theme of our annual report: “**Compassion in Action.**” Throughout the 2023 fiscal year, Kids Central exemplified this theme in every aspect of its work.

Within the pages of this report, you will find compelling evidence of the impact of compassion in action. The power of Community Based Care is founded in the model’s ability to engage the compassion we all have for children. From the dedicated efforts of our staff and partners to the unwavering love and care of foster and adoptive parents to generosity of our volunteers, donors, and supporters, our community is blessed with so many people acting together to achieve the best results for children.

It is our collective compassion for children that has driven us forward. As we celebrate our successes, let us also remain vigilant in our pursuit to help children and families build better lives and futures. I am confident Kids Central will continue to lead the effort to put compassion in action, inspire hope, and make a lasting impact for years to come.

# LEADERSHIP

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS • 2022-2023



LANCE  
KINNEY

— Board Chair —



KEVIN  
McDONALD

— Secretary/Treasurer —



MIKE  
JORDAN, M.D.

— Past Chairman —



LISA  
ALEXANDER

— Marion County —



MATT  
BARTOLI

— Lake County —



DIANA  
BROWN

— Lake County —



MARK  
IMES

— Marion County —



GORDON  
JOHNSON

— Sumter County —



JANICE  
JOHNSON

— Citrus County —



ANTHONY  
PIARULLI

— Hernando County —



BRAD  
ROGERS

— Marion County —



REBECCA  
SCHATT

— Marion County —



STEPHEN  
SPIVEY

— Marion County —



MARK  
WICKHAM

— Nonvoting Member —

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

- JOHN COOPER — Chief Executive Officer
- JOHN AITKEN — Chief Financial Officer
- SHALONDA MCHENRY-SIMS — Chief of Operations
- DAVID DESTEFANO — Chief of Strategy
- VERAUNDA JACKSON — Chief Legal Officer



# PROTECTING



## FOSTER CARE

**P**arents may face various challenges preventing them from safely caring for their children, such as substance abuse, illness, incarceration, domestic violence, abandonment, sexual abuse, or neglect. In such cases, unless relatives are available to provide care, children may be placed in foster care, which serves as a temporary shelter until reunification with family is possible. Foster families, trained and licensed by Kids Central, provide support during this critical period. Reuniting children with their families safely is the primary goal, allowing parents the opportunity to make necessary life changes. While they work towards this, foster care provides a stable environment for the children. Our community is grateful for these compassionate individuals who care for children in need.



1,689 Children in Care



92 New Foster Homes Added

## ADOPTION

**W**hen conditions remain that prevent safely reuniting children with their parents, adoption usually becomes the goal to find the children loving and forever families. Kids Central recruits and trains adoptive homes interested in adopting children from the child welfare system. Loving adoptive families are currently needed for many children in our community, especially for sibling groups and teens.



196 Children Adopted



317 Children Eligible for Adoption

Kids Central also coordinates post-adoption services to support families after they adopt children from the child welfare system. Adoption subsidies are available to help financially support the families with the adopted child's special needs. Adopted children are eligible for Medicaid services and can also receive a tuition waiver for their post-secondary education.

**NOTE:** Statistics provided for FY 2022-23 (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)

# CHILDREN

## CASE MANAGEMENT

**W**hen families are directed to Dependency Court due to child abuse or neglect, the court approves a case plan. Kids Central and its subcontracted Case Management Agencies manage these case plans. Case management's primary functions include making referrals on the family's behalf for the services identified in the case, visiting the child at least once every 30 days to help assure their safety and wellbeing, monitoring and documenting the family's progress with the plan, and providing information to the court. Case managers aim to find each child a safe, permanent living arrangement within 12 months.



**4,119** Children Receiving Case Management Services

## INDEPENDENT LIVING

**K**ids Central and its partners offer Independent Living services to youth and young adults in foster care. Each year, some children age out of the system without reunification or a permanent home. To support them, Kids Central harnesses state, federal, community and donated resources. These resources provide vital tools for a successful transition to adulthood, including transportation, housing assistance and emotional support. Independent Living services also help young adults pursue their education and employment goals.



**22** High School Diplomas Earned by Program Participants



**28** Program Participants Who Completed or Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education



# SUPPORTING

## FAMILY PRESERVATION

**K**ids Central believes investing in families up-front, before a call to the abuse hotline, reduces the likelihood the children will be abused or neglected and need help later. Research-based and results-driven prevention programs are used to help safely keep children with their families.

Preventing child abuse and neglect before it starts is the best hope for children. Family preservation services help families identify and reduce the risk factors in the home. These services strengthen families while also protecting children.



447 Cases Referred



303 Families Who Successfully Completed Their Program

## KINSHIP

**T**o address the needs of over 14,000 children in Circuit 5 cared for by relatives, Kids Central established a comprehensive Kinship Care Program. This program offers support services as part of a multi-level prevention strategy, aiming to maintain children in safe, nurturing homes with family members.



256 New Referrals



436 Children Assisted



# FAMILIES

## EDUCATION

While most children benefit from parental involvement in their education, foster children historically face challenges and lack necessary advocacy for academic success. Kids Central partners with foster parents and school systems to provide foster youth with educational advocacy to ensure they receive the learning opportunities to thrive in school and beyond.



**647** Children Assisted  
by Education  
Liaison



**246** Education  
Advocates Trained



## BABY SLEEP BASICS

In Florida, more children die from asphyxiation than drowning, often due to unsafe sleep environments like co-sleeping. Kids Central works to stop preventable infant deaths through the Baby Sleep Basics Program. This program provides safe sleep education and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) information to parents or guardians.

## HEALTHY START & MIECHV

Healthy Start is a comprehensive program in Florida that supports optimal prenatal health and developmental outcomes for pregnant women and babies. It offers free screenings to identify risks such as low birth weight, poor prenatal health, and child abuse and neglect. Healthy Start services are available to anyone who is pregnant, recently lost a pregnancy or has a child under three years of age. Kids Central delivers Healthy Start services in Alachua, Hernando, and Lake Counties.



**3,073** Healthy Start  
Clients

• Provided with 41,149 Services



**238** MIECHV  
Clients

• Completed 3,508 Visits

Kids Central is contracted to provide services for the Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood, Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) in Alachua and Marion Counties. This program supports parents and caregivers with children from birth to three years old. This program empowers parents to be their child's first teacher by educating parents about child developmental milestones, offering one-on-one parenting support, facilitating support groups and addressing developmental delays or health issues.



# ENGAGING



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Community support and engagement in the efforts to strengthen families and protect and nurture children is the underlying principle of Florida's system of Community Based Care. Children and families are best served by a system of care that utilizes the organizations, advocates, and resources in their own communities.



**\$176k** Donations Received  
from Fundraising

Kids Central prioritizes building and maintaining strong relationships within the local community, which encompasses clients, neighbors, public officials, government agencies, other nonprofits, and potential donors. The Community Affairs Department acts as a bridge between Kids Central and the community by sharing organizational information. Through various initiatives, including prevention and awareness events and fundraising activities, Kids Central actively engages the community, and collects donations to address the needs of our clients.



# COMMUNITIES

## KIDS CENTRAL CONNECT

In partnership with Findhelp.org, Kids Central maintains KidsCentralConnect.org, our social care network. This initiative reflects Kids Central's commitment to improving resource accessibility within our communities. Through collaborative efforts and connections with similar organizations, KidsCentralConnect.org functions as a digital platform to promote and facilitate support services that align with our mission of protecting children, supporting families, and engaging communities.

KidsCentralConnect.org has over 10,000 participating organizations, offering a wide range of services, providing valuable assistance to individuals in need.

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteers have an enormous impact on the health and well-being of communities. As needs in our communities grow, the generosity of volunteers becomes even more important. Kids Central is thankful for our volunteers that help carry out our mission, assist staff, and reduce organizational costs.

## RESOURCE CENTERS

Kids Central partners with the city of Leesburg to maintain a neighborhood resource center in Lake County. This resource center increases access to services by engaging community partners in the coordination of services and bringing services closer to people who need them.



**3,509** Total Families and Children Helped

• 1,458 Families and 2,051 Children

Kids Central also maintains a resource center at its corporate office in Wildwood. Many families supported by Kids Central and its partners face challenges in meeting basic needs like food and clothing. Thanks to community support and private donors, the Resource Center offers a range of new and gently used items, including housewares, furniture, clothing, hygiene products, baby care items, and food. These donated items are available to children and families in crisis who are clients of Kids Central.





**KIDS CENTRAL, INC.®**  
A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN  
*Building Better Lives*

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Produced with the financial assistance of



**GOLD**  
MARKETING™



The Kids Central network is  
accredited by the Council  
on Accreditation (COA).

*Kids Central, Inc. is a private, nonprofit corporation, exempt from federal income tax under chapter 501(c)(3). Kids Central is registered with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs (#CH21011). A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling, toll-free, 1-800-435-7352, within Florida. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the State.*

*Kids Central, Inc. is a community-based care lead agency contracted with the Department of Children and Families.*