



# Impact Report



**2015**





## *Our Mission*

*To advance the well-being of children and families through high-quality programs in prevention, early intervention, child development, behavioral health, education and advocacy.*



## *Celebrating Our Past, Our Future*



*Jim Nau  
Board President*



*Julie Swindler, LCSW  
CEO*

**T**his year marks the 25th anniversary of Families First. We look back with pride and we look ahead with hope and anticipation of many more great things to come for the families we serve. We are thankful to all who have made our county's most vulnerable families and children their priority – our staff, our community supporters, and our boards of directors. First and foremost, we celebrate the generations of families who have come through our doors seeking that hand up that enables them to regain their stability, their self-sufficiency, and their abilities to be the best parents possible. We celebrate our community that sees the good in every family and chooses to invest in their future and that of generations to come that are breaking cycles of abuse, violence, addiction, and poverty.

Over the past 25 years, we have seen needs change and have risen to the challenge of meeting them. We have grown from one program to eight in order to meet needs in the areas of child abuse prevention, health, behavioral health and housing. Why? Because we learned early on that one size does not fit all; that families need choices, a voice in what direction their journey will take. Most of all, they need people in their corner – not dwelling on deficiencies, but celebrating triumphs, no matter how small. We have learned much along the way, mainly from the families themselves.

We have watched many overcome unimaginable hardships and emerge as contributing members of our community, raising children who will break the cycle and move on to successful adulthood. They are our best teachers and we listen closely to them. So thank you to our generous donors, volunteers and a caring community for your wise investments; together we will continue to give a hand to our most vulnerable population. Together, we will continue to build stronger families and stronger communities.

*When you believe in families, they begin to believe in themselves.*



*JoAnn Wagner  
President  
Families First  
Foundation*

**T**hat's what Families First has been proving for the thousands of families served over the past 25 years. This is an outstanding organization fueled by the passion of its staff, boards of directors, and, most importantly, by the resilient spirit of so many of our county's most vulnerable families. For this reason, the Families First of Palm Beach County Foundation, Inc. was created three years ago. We sought a method to ensure the future sustainability of critical programs and services that help so many families gain or regain their self-sufficiency. What better investment than prevention – helping families and children before a crisis, such as abuse or neglect, occurs rather than paying for its consequences afterward.

Contributing to the Foundation is an investment in our county's future. It helps ensure that future families and children can benefit from services that lead them to become or return to being contributing members of our community. Remember, stronger families mean stronger communities.



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*We Couldn't Do It Without Our Committed Boards...*

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Philip M. Sprinkle, II  
*Legal Counsel*

*Healthy Families is a nationally-recognized child abuse prevention program.*

**In 2015, Families First ensured that 841 children were protected. Cost Savings: Up to \$72,709 for every child remaining with their parents and out of the child welfare system**

### **Family Thriving Thanks to Healthy Families Cecilia Parra – Tim Bober**

Ask Cecilia or Tim where they'll be in five years and they happily tell you in their own house, good jobs, another child – a happy family. But it wasn't like that when Cecilia discovered she was pregnant and was worried about what kind of mother she would be. She and Tim were happy, but she still felt very much alone and scared with no family nearby and Tim working and going to college. "I was afraid I wouldn't be a good mother." Then she found Healthy Families and Family Support Worker Gloria Perez. Cecilia found in Gloria what she didn't have in her own family – someone to reassure her, guide her and answer her questions and concerns without judgment.

"When I met Gloria, she gave me tips about being a good mother and reassured me



that I'd be okay. She is always available and she taught me a lot about child development," Cecilia said. She also received guidance in navigating the social services system to get affordable health care during her pregnancy and supplemental dietary items. While seeking his accounting degree from FAU, Tim, too, is finding his place as a loving, attentive, and involved father with Gloria's help.

*Child First is a nationally evidence-based model that works with very vulnerable young children and families, providing intensive, home-based services.*

**C**hild First works to decrease the incidence of serious emotional disturbance, developmental and learning problems, and abuse and neglect among high-risk young children and families. Child First provides services to families with children birth to age 6 in which the child has emotional, behavioral, or developmental concerns or the family faces multiple barriers. A clinician and care coordinator provide services that include comprehensive assessment of child and family needs, observation and consultation in early care and education settings, parent-child mental health intervention, development of a family and a child plan of care, and care coordination/case management.



When young children grow up in environments where there is violence, neglect, mental illness, or substance abuse, the stress can be toxic to their developing brains. But, we can intervene to prevent this damage. Scientific research demonstrates that we can make a difference if we:

- Work to connect families to needed community-based services to decrease the stress, and,
- Build strong, loving, parent-child relationships that protect and heal the brain from trauma and stress.

Our goal is a young brain focused on learning rather than a brain focused on survival.



*In 2015, Families First was designated as a service provider for Child First. We began taking clients into the program in late 2015.*

*A street outreach program aimed at finding high-risk women and getting them services to prevent transmission of HIV/AIDS to their babies.*



***“Ms. Wanda helped me to get a very nice nurse to come and see me. I did not know what to expect being pregnant with my first baby. Ms. Wanda has helped take the fear out of not knowing where to turn for help. She listens.”***

***Arishema***

**In 2015, Families First engaged 235 pregnant, high-risk women; 100% of the 11 babies born to HIV+ mothers tested negative for HIV within six months. Savings: \$21,768 per year for every child born free of HIV.**

**A**rishema is a young mother who was pregnant for the first time and had no idea how to access affordable prenatal care. She connected with TOPWA through the program’s outreach efforts in an underserved area of Royal Palm Beach. Outreach worker Wanda Jones-Dhoray helped link her to needed resources, including SOBRA (pregnancy Medicaid) and Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies. Arishema was also referred to a nurse to monitor her pregnancy through the Healthy Beginnings program, and, when she attended TOPWA’s annual baby shower, she received a voucher for a car seat from Safe Kids Coalition.



Following the birth of Arishema’s 6 lb., 4oz. healthy baby boy, Jahsiah, in September, 2015, Wanda connected Arishema with Home Safe where she received a Pack ‘n Play for her new infant. Mother and baby are thriving.

## KIN SUPPORT PROJECT

*The Kin Support Project guides relative caregivers, raising a loved one's children, in finding and accessing legal and other needed services. Its goal is to keep children out of the child welfare system.*

**In 2015, 120 children remained with relative caregivers and out of the foster care system.**

**Savings: Up to \$72,709 for every child remaining with a relative and out of the child welfare system.**

Andrea will never forget the day she heard the knock on her Pleasant City door that changed her whole life. On the other side of the door were her three grandchildren, then ages 4, 2 and 1, who had been left on her doorstep by her daughter. Angry, resentful, and bewildered, she didn't know what to do or how to be a mother again.



She missed days of work, had to move, find affordable child care. Before her son graduated from high school the next year, she found herself living in a hotel with her son and three young grandchildren. She became more and more depressed, especially since she felt guilty about not being emotionally available to her young grandchildren.

“I wanted my life back; I never thought I'd have to do this. I cried every day, got angry and knew I needed help,” said Andrea.

Help is what she received through Families First's Kin Support Project. She found professionals there who didn't judge her when she talked about her feelings of resentment. She got services to help with child care, with her depression, and even help with proper nutrition to help her shed weight that was affecting her health. Most of all, she found herself again.

“It suddenly hit me that this [raising her grandchildren] was permanent. I needed a way to take a deep breath, love them and get help.” With the help of the Kin Support program, Andrea found housing, therapeutic services, and other help and she began enjoying her time with the children, now ages 11, 9 and 8. She was embarrassed that she didn't have the knowledge to help them with homework, so she is working on getting her GED so she can help them, she says with a smile.

## THE OASIS PROJECT

*In partnership with Genesis Community Health Center, our goal is to increase access to health care for women of child-bearing age to improve birth outcomes.*

**In 2015, the Oasis Project assisted 82 women of childbearing age through increased access to health care and 106 women accessed benefits.**

**Savings:** *For each \$1 spent on prenatal care, \$2.57 in medical care costs is saved.*



**J**ean, a 35-year-old Creole-speaking woman was desperate when she arrived at the Genesis Community Health Center. For months she had tried unsuccessfully to get food assistance for her family. The Families First outreach specialist helped Jean fill out a food assistance application and delivered it for her. Three weeks later, Jean returned to meet with

the outreach specialist to learn whether any progress had been made in obtaining the food assistance. The outreach specialist happily told her that she had been approved for food assistance. Jean was so grateful that she later called the outreach specialist to thank her for her patience and success in helping her and her family with this most basic need.

## PROJECT CONNECT

*In partnership with Adopt-A-Family, Project Connect coordinates services for those at risk of homelessness who face multiple issues impacting their ability to maintain housing stability and self-sufficiency.*

**In 2015, 32 families which included 72 children and 49 adults were served.**

**Savings:** *Up to \$8,796 per year for every family prevented from entering an emergency shelter.*

**T**he Robins family – Lydia, Robert, and their two children, ages 2 and 14, never pictured themselves homeless. After all, both parents worked. Then the bottom dropped out – Lydia lost her job after her company’s sales dropped. Robert, a musician, didn’t earn enough to support the family of four. They lost their apartment when they couldn’t pay the rent any longer. While visiting a local food pantry, the family was referred to Family Promise, a local homeless program, for temporary housing assistance and was in a shelter for 60 days before being referred to Project Connect which provided them with affordable housing.

Robert took a sales job to supplement his weekend band work. Project Connect staff continues to work with the mother, a Marines veteran, in accessing medical care and to get veterans’ assistance while searching for a job. The Robins are grateful for the assistance they’ve received so that they can provide a safe and stable home for their children.



*Bridges to Success provides permanent, supportive housing for families in the Royal Palm Beach and Glades areas facing health and mental health challenges that impair their ability to maintain stable housing.*

**In 2015, 10 families, which include 14 children and 13 adults, received supportive housing. All 10 housing units have been at capacity throughout the year.**

**Savings: Homeless services cost approximately \$31,000 per year; permanent supportive housing \$10,000 a year. Saving \$21,000 for each family.**



**T**he only thing stable in Anna's life for the past five years has been the housing provided through Families First's Bridges to Success program. It has enabled her to keep her son safe and secure while she battled her demons. She never had that stability as a child in a family with a history of substance abuse.

She began using drugs at the age of 12; at 18 she became pregnant, but was ignored by the baby's father and his family. Her drug habit intensified after she had her son and the Department of Children and Families stepped in, requiring her to attend drug rehabilitation in order to keep her son. She did so, but relapsed several times before getting back on track. She now holds a full-time job and put legal issues behind her. Anna now looks forward to a brighter future with her son. She plans to complete the requirements for an associate's degree.

Thanks to the permanent, supportive housing she received in Bridges To Success, Anna remains positive and thankful to have kept her son with her.



*Five agencies, including Families First, provide individualized, comprehensive, family-driven mental health services for at-risk and high-risk children and their families across Palm Beach County.*

**In 2015, 18 families, which included 37 children and 32 adults, received services. This was our start-up year with the first client receiving services beginning in December of 2014.**

**Savings:** *The average reduction in per-child hospital days resulted in an average savings of \$2,776.85 per child.*

**B**rothers Anselmo, 13, and Pedro, 10, were forced to grow up quickly when their father died of food poisoning five years ago, leaving their mother to raise them and their two younger siblings. Anselmo worried constantly about his mother, Rosa, who was sad much of the time, and about his siblings, especially Pedro who could not accept his father's death. Anselmo was also unhappy with his own sudden inability to function well at school.

The older boys were referred to the Children's Behavioral Health Collaborative where both progressed quickly with the help of a therapist. Ten months after starting therapy, Anselmo had improved his grades at school; he was reporting no feelings of depression and had been able to develop effective coping mechanisms for his anxiety. Pedro was able to verbalize his feelings and thoughts about the death of his father, and shared that he would like to finally accept and overcome his loss. To support a healthy grieving process, the therapist connected Pedro, Alberto, and Gabriella to a children's grief group. Rosa expressed relief that she and her children are receiving the support that they need and she feels more hopeful for their future.



# Families First...



25th Anniversary celebration board chairs JoAnn Wagner and Jim Nau



Children's Day Luncheon – Gary Lesser and Michelle Diffenderfer



TOPWA  
Baby Shower Celebration



Scavenger Hunt



# The Year in Review



*Spare Some for Charity RMA bowling event*



*RMA Golf Tournament*



*Great Charity Challenge*



*Healthy Families Graduation Celebration*



*Smash Bash*



## FUNDERS & DONORS FOR FISCAL YEAR 10/1/14 - 9/30/15



### **GOVERNMENT & AGENCY**

Children's Services Council  
Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Florida Department of Health  
Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners  
The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida  
Town of Palm Beach United Way  
United Way of Palm Beach County

### **\$25,000 PLUS**

Anonymous Foundation  
Libra Foundation  
Mary Alice Fortin Foundation  
Quantum Foundation  
The Batchelor Foundation  
The Lost Tree Village Charitable Foundation

### **\$10,000 to \$24,999**

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Jewish Women's Foundation of Greater Palm Beaches  
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Risk Management Association of South Florida  
Two Men and a Truck, Palm Beach & Treasure Coast

### **\$2,000 to \$4,999**

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Jodie & Jeff Petrone  
Lisa & James Mahlbacher  
Palm Beach Kennel Club  
Roxanna Childs



## FINANCIALS 10/1/14 - 9/30/15

### SUMMARY BALANCE SHEET

	2015 Total	2014 Total
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	635,044	918,993
Investments	499,826	195,632
Other Current Assets	408,417	433,913
Non-Current Assets	112,545	45,868
Total	1,655,832	1,594,406
 <b>Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>		
Accounts Payable	74,317	73,212
Net Assets	1,581,515	1,521,194
Total	1,655,832	1,594,406

### SUMMARY STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

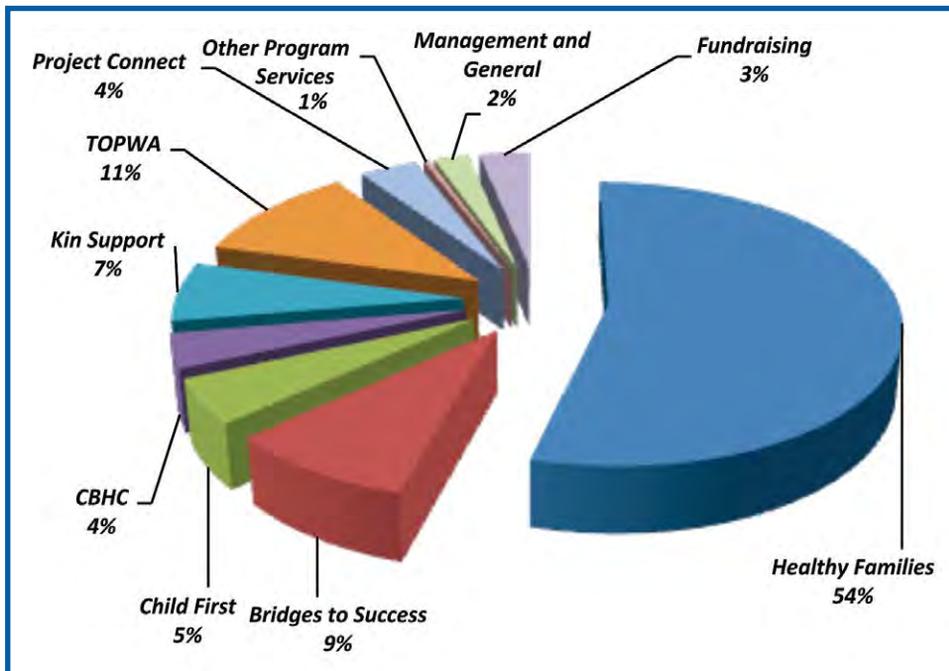
<b>Revenue and Support</b>		
Government	2,585,906	2,176,629
Community	578,819	550,395
Other	69,053	86,856
Fundraising	145,974	129,080
Investments	(8,059)	12,015
	3,371,693	2,954,975
 <b>Expenses</b>		
Program Services	3,127,728	2,920,298
Supporting Services	183,644	150,983
	3,311,372	3,071,281
Change in Net Assets	60,321	(116,306)

*Families First is audited by the independent CPA firm of Templeton & Company, LLP which conducted its examination in accordance with Government Auditing Standards. Templeton & Company, LLP rendered an unqualified opinion (typically called a "clean opinion") on Families First's financial statements for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2015. Highlights of Families First's financial position and results of operations are presented here. For years ended September 30, 2015 and 2014, \$410,066 and \$453,605 of expenses were allocated to program services from management and general expenses.*

# FINANCIALS 10/1/14 - 9/30/15

## EXPENSES BY PROGRAM

	2015 Total	2014 Total
<b>Program Services</b>		
Healthy Families	1,798,032	1,755,852
Bridges to Success	302,883	323,484
Child First	168,173	-
Children's Behavioral		
Health Collaborative (CBHC)	128,745	7,058
Kin Support	225,390	220,295
Targeted Outreach for		
Pregnant Women (TOPWA)	367,274	356,124
Project Connect	125,028	128,341
Other Program Services	12,203	129,144
Management and General	75,370	100,171
Fundraising	108,274	50,812
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,311,372</b>	<b>3,071,281</b>





### ***Leave A Legacy Of Love***

**Families First of Palm Beach County** created a foundation in 2012 to ensure that Families First can continue to invest in the future of children for generations to come. We will always have new parents who face barriers and need guidance to provide the best for their children; we will remain determined to keep families together and children out of the child welfare system.

You can help us continue our work by giving a planned gift. Planned gifts allow you to meet both your philanthropic giving goals and meet your own financial needs. Consider planned giving – there are many ways to do so – or contribute to our endowment.

***For more information on the Foundation, the organization and planned giving opportunities, please contact Samantha Whiteman, Director of Development, at 561.318.4219.***

**Families First of Palm Beach County Foundation, Inc.** offers many ways to make it beneficiaries of a bequest, trust, retirement plan or insurance policy.



***Specific Dollar Amount***

***Percentage of Estate***

***Residual Remains of Estate***

You can also decide how your bequest will be used:

***Restricted*** – select from among our many opportunities:

- Child abuse prevention
- Client basic needs
- Women's healthcare
- Caregiving services
- Healthy Families
- Behavioral health services
- HIV/AIDS prevention in newborns
- Housing programs
- Operating costs
- Families First endowment

***Unrestricted*** – These will benefit the areas of greatest need at the time of the bequest.



## **National Accreditation**

**Families First** ended the year on a high note when it received notice that the organization has **once again received national accreditation through the Council On Accreditation**. This organization has been the national standard-bearer of accreditation for nonprofits since 1977.

COA accredits over 2,000 private and public organizations and programs that serve more than 7 million individuals and families in the United States, Canada, and overseas. The COA standards cover over 60 different service domains and hundreds of different types of programs. The accreditation process is designed to meet the needs of diverse organizations - voluntary, public and proprietary, local and statewide, large and small.

“We hold our own organization to high standards and this accreditation process lets us know we’re on the right track. We are thrilled and proud to have again received this affirmation,” said CEO Julie Swindler.



## **The Great Give – Coming Again May 3**

Once again, we have experienced the incredible giving spirit of our community that is so willing to help families that are experiencing life-altering issues. The proof of this comes to us throughout the year, but never more so than on the day of The Great Give. This one-day, online giving event is the product of United Way of Palm Beach County and Community Foundation of Palm Beach and Martin Counties locally and United Way of Martin County. **Thanks to the generosity of our community, Families First received almost \$28,000 in donations during that 24-hour period.** It allows us to continue what we’ve been doing for 25 years – helping families to help themselves.

This effort celebrated the spirit of giving in our community, increased awareness for many important local causes and raised critical funds for 437 nonprofits, including Families First of Palm Beach County. **We hope you’ll think of us again on May 3, 2016 for the third year of this event.**



*We are Grateful for...*

*Our Annual Sponsors*



*and...  
Our Funding Partners*





**Families First of Palm Beach County**  
**3333 Forest Hill Blvd.**  
**West Palm Beach, Florida 33406**  
**[www.familiesfirstpbc.org](http://www.familiesfirstpbc.org) (561) 721-2802**

