



FamiliesFirst

*Creating
Lasting Ripples*

2016 Annual Report



*“I alone cannot
change the world,
but I can cast a
stone across the
waters and create
many ripples.”*

– Mother Teresa

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Reflecting on my first full year as President and CEO of Families First, I could not be prouder to lead such a capable, dedicated staff. It is a privilege to stand on the shoulders of generations of great leaders who dedicated this organization to creating a community of healthy, capable, and loving families. At the same time, I am passionately determined to help Families First do even more for our community, but this cannot be done without all of you.

In the reception area at Families First there is a beautiful painting created by a local artist that fills an entire wall. The painting depicts a leafless tree that over the years has sprouted gold and brass leaves engraved with the names of individuals, families, businesses, and foundations that made significant gifts to sustain our mission.



At Families First we often use the image of a tree to depict our work – we see it as a “family tree,” offering strength, shelter, growth, and a source of renewal for those we serve. Yet, a tree cannot thrive without life’s most important element – **water**. As our supporters and partners, **you are the water** for the Families First tree. Without you our organization could not continue to grow and branch out as we have over these past 181 years.

Your support may come in the form of small raindrops, a steady rain, or sometimes even a torrential downpour, like we experienced this year with a major gift from the Lilly Endowment. No matter the size of the gift, we could not be more grateful for the community’s outpouring of generosity to create a community of healthy, capable, and loving families!

And still, the raging rivers of violence, poverty, drug addiction, and mental illness plague our community and threaten to overwhelm, and even drown, many of our neighbors. Families First is sending out lifeboats every day to rescue people at risk, and the urgency has never been greater. However, we cannot calm these raging rivers on our own.

Even as Families First continues to offer safe harbor during life’s storms, our focus must shift to preventing storms BEFORE they form. Together with donors, volunteers, allies, and policy-makers who believe as we do that healthy families are the very foundation of a healthy community, we can **create ripples in the water** and find new, creative solutions to the problems that plague our community. I am confident that by partnering with others who want to make central Indiana a model of health, well-being, safety, and peace, we can make positive changes happen.

Let’s create some lasting ripples,

Handwritten signature of David Siler.

David Siler, LCSW
President & CEO, Families First



MISSION, VISION, AND 2016 HIGHLIGHTS

OUR MISSION:

To create healthier communities by strengthening families and individuals during life challenges and changes.

OUR VISION:

A Community of Healthy, Capable and Loving Families

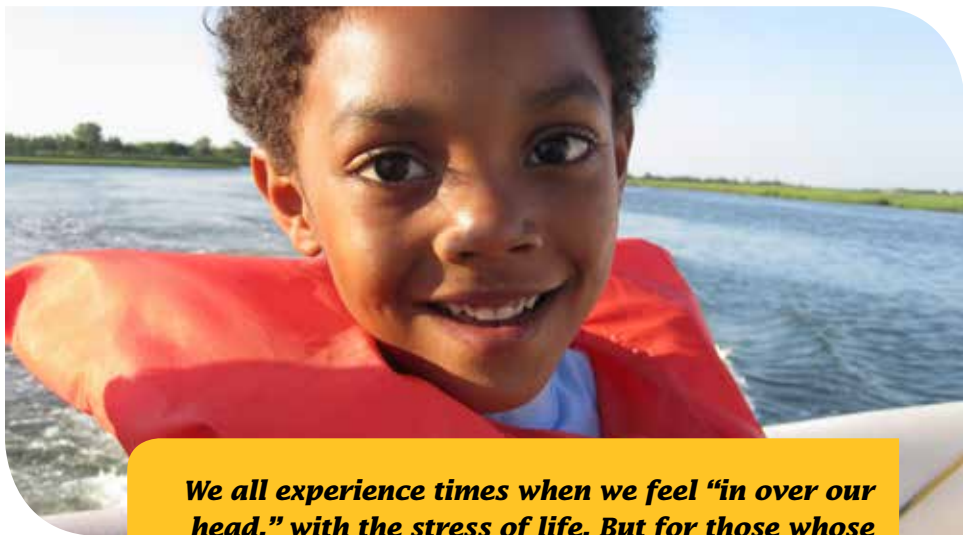
Because of generous donors like you who have chosen to invest in our mission, we celebrate 2016 as another successful year of progress toward our vision of a community of **healthy, capable and loving** families. We created ripples in the lives of more than **20,000 adults and children** in central Indiana last year and guided them through rough waters to reach their full human potential. Your generosity ensured that struggling individuals and families could access the counseling, education and support they needed, regardless of ability to pay. Here are a few examples of how your support enabled us to strengthen the community and change lives.

DURING 2016, FAMILIES FIRST:

- ❁ Received a \$7.5 million gift from Lilly Endowment for long-term financial sustainability
- ❁ Acquired and successfully merged Mental Health America of Greater Indianapolis (MHA) into Families First, resulting in integration of five former MHA board members, four members of MHA staff, and significant expansion of services
- ❁ Implemented a new organizational structure to enhance operating efficiencies and better support the needs of direct service staff
- ❁ Completed a new 3-year strategic plan
- ❁ Established new collaborations with two partner organizations – the John H. Boner Community Center and La Plaza – to increase outreach and community impact
- ❁ Developed plans for a future expansion of our current office space to improve services
- ❁ Vetted and selected a new electronic medical records software system for implementation in 2017



Families First



We all experience times when we feel “in over our head,” with the stress of life. But for those whose difficulties are so great that they feel they’re drowning, Families First is a life vest, providing the relief and support they need to survive – and your support makes that possible.

- ❁ In 2016, our addictions counselors and recovery coaches worked to free more than **1,100 adults** from the prison of substance abuse, and helped their loved ones understand the disease of addiction.
- ❁ Nearly **800 adults and children** received affordable, high-quality mental health counseling to cope with overwhelming stress, heal from trauma, and resolve relationship difficulties.
- ❁ Counselors and trained volunteers responded to **14,575 calls and 1,260 texts** to our 24/7 Crisis Line, ensuring people who feel desperate or are contemplating suicide always have somewhere to turn for help.

“Being here helped me realize that my life is a whole lot more important than I thought. I’m making better choices in life, without drinking, and I’m accomplishing my goals.”

“I have been coming for counseling and I love it. It has changed my life. I have been to many counselors over the years and I’ve never felt like this before. I even brought my friend with me who is now also getting counseling to help her achieve her goals, too.”

NAVIGATING DANGEROUS CURRENTS



No one expects life to be “smooth seas” all the time. Inevitably, we all go through rough waters and must hang on tight and ride the rapids. But for some, these dangerous currents put their very survival at risk. Thanks to your support, Families First is there to navigate them into a safe harbor.

- ❁ In 2016, our Protective Order Project served **more than 700 victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault** with crisis intervention, safety planning, help in obtaining a protective order, and support navigating the legal process.
- ❁ Home-based counseling, bill-pay assistance, and care management ensured that **83 endangered seniors and adults with disabilities** were protected from financial exploitation, self-neglect, and abuse.
- ❁ **259 at-risk families** received intensive in-home therapy and case management services to promote more nurturing, parent-child interactions, improve child well-being, and increase family stability.

“My experience with Families First has been fantastic. My counselor has been supportive, understanding, and encouraging, without being judgmental. She also isn’t afraid to bring up the tough topics in a way that helps me effectively discuss positive solutions.”

“My counselor is amazing. I don’t really have a support system at home, but I know that if I ever really need someone to talk to, I can always talk to her, even outside of group.”

A COMPASS ON THE RIVER OF LIFE



Each of us must chart our own unique course as we travel the river of life. At times, the river flows smoothly, but unexpected twists and turns can set us spiraling down a path of uncertainty and fear, making it feel impossible to ever get back on track. Through your continued support, Families First serves as a compass to guide people through life's challenges and changes, and direct them back to the right path.

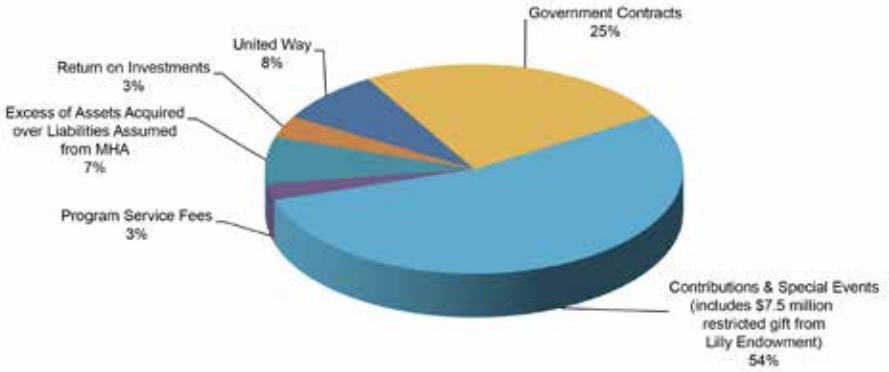
- ❁ In 2016, **229 parents** completed parenting education courses that gave them the skills to successfully navigate the many challenges of raising a child, set realistic expectations, and utilize positive and effective parenting techniques.
- ❁ **83 parents** attended Parent Cafes featuring guided conversations designed to develop peer support networks, enhance parenting skills, and promote personal growth.
- ❁ **Nearly 300 people** participated in community education sessions to learn how to recognize and respond to mental health crises, relationship violence, or child abuse.

"Thank you, Families First, for providing this outlet for parents. We all need it, and it has helped me. I hope more people will become aware of the program because it is effective."

"Always such a great experience – rejuvenating, refreshing, and enlightening."

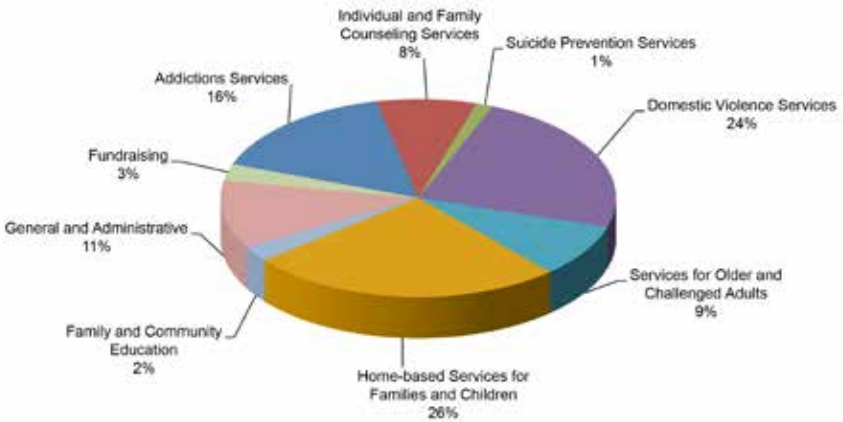
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

REVENUE BY SOURCE 2016



Total Revenue \$14,416,500

EXPENSE BY PROGRAM 2016



Total Expenses \$5,293,200

2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Chris York, Chair
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Joel Swider

Mark L. Winzenread
Erik Zimmerman

DEANS

Brad Boyd
Dave Maas
Tom Peck
Rose Popovich
Carol Risting
Jane Ann Stautz
Jane Watson

ELECTED DIRECTORS

Nick Alford



LOCATIONS:

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Phone 317.634.6341

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familiesfirstindiana.org

