



CHILDREN FIRST

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

OUR MISSION

Strengthening children and families by improving the quality of their lives through a comprehensive approach to development, education, health and well-being.

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2016 Annual Report! This year we are looking back, not only at agency accomplishments over the past year, but also at the achievements of some former students and families. As an organization, Children First has grown in many ways to better serve the needs of local children and families, thanks in part to our Raise Your Hand Campaign.

We have added more Family Advocates to assist families with their goals, a third teacher in each of our pre-K classrooms to provide greater individualized attention, a mental health professional to lead counseling, and two new infant and toddler rooms to offer more babies a nurturing, loving environment.

We know that investing in early childhood education makes a difference. Like the stories you will read in this report, vulnerable children and families gain the confidence to reach for their dreams. Because of you, these aspiring performers, business professionals, and skilled tradesmen are poised for success.

The board of directors and staff of Children First remain committed to giving every child the opportunity to succeed, and your support makes it possible. Together, we are making progress in helping the at-risk families of our community to build better lives.

Thank you again for all you do for children and families!

Sincerely,

Jim Rolfes
Board Chair

Philip Tavill
President & CEO



Where are they now?



TURI

LOVES ART, MUSIC AND SCIENCE AND WANTS TO PERFORM ON STAGE.



AVERY

LOVES MATH, READING, AND PLAYING SOCCER. SHE HOPES TO FOLLOW IN HER MOTHER'S FOOTSTEPS AND HAVE A CAREER IN EDUCATION.



SY-MIA

LOVES MATH AND ASPIRES TO BECOME AN ACTRESS.

A Healthy Beginning at Children First

Of the more than 600 under-privileged children we serve every year at our 13 locations in Sarasota County, 40% are less than three years old and 60% are between the ages of three and five. The challenges they face are unimaginable to many.

More than 95% come from families that earn less than the federal poverty level and many face food insecurity. Children First provides more than 50% of the weekly nutrition received by the children in our classrooms. Nearly 15% of our children have some form of physical, emotional or developmental disability.

With the belief that every child deserves an equal opportunity to succeed, these services are provided to the most economically vulnerable children and families in our community:

- Infant and Toddler Care
- Early Childhood Education
- Nutrition
- Healthcare Screenings
- Emotional & Behavioral Support
- Elaine's Kids (for children at highest risk of summer learning loss)
- Summer programs

Without Children First, early care and education, nutrition, health screenings and therapy would likely be unattainable for the children and families we serve.



Where are they now?

CYRUS, A SHOOTING GUARD FOR HIS VARSITY BASKETBALL TEAM, GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL IN 2017. HE LOVES TECHNOLOGY, AND PLANS TO ATTEND COLLEGE TO BECOME AN ARCHITECT OR TECHNICIAN.



EARLY HEAD START & HEAD START

Expectant families, infants and toddlers up to three years old who are at or below the federal poverty guideline level receive support through Early Head Start. Dedicated Family Advocates encourage expectant mothers

to access proper prenatal care and provide guidance after the child's birth. Once they reach the classroom, each child is cared for and nurtured at the highest standard of early childhood education. In Head Start, at-risk children, ages three to five, are prepared for Kindergarten so

they can begin school on pace with their average-income peers. Family Advocates work with each family throughout their journey at Children First to reach for their dreams and build better lives.



“I remember this classroom and playing with blocks. I still love building things and want to become an architect.”

Reaching New Heights Together

Six-foot-tall Cyrus stops to say hello to old mentors and friends as he walks the halls on a recent visit to Children First. “I remember being in this classroom and playing with blocks. I still love building things and want to go to school to become an architect,” says Cyrus.

As Latonda stands in the classroom where her son once sat to learn the alphabet and where she now works, she reflects on the past two decades with a smile. What began as an uphill climb for the two has become a celebration of milestones reached. “I was a student working on my Associate’s degree in Early Childhood Education when Cyrus was born, so I knew how much he would benefit from it.”

Cyrus plans to attend college to pursue his interest in how things are built. From building blocks to architecture, he’s ready for the next phase of his journey. As for Latonda, she will celebrate receiving her Bachelor’s Degree in Early Childhood Education.

“I couldn’t be prouder, or more grateful to Children First,” adds Latonda, “for the way both of our lives have turned out.”



PROGRAM OF EXCELLENCE

Children First is one of nine Head Start programs out of 1,800 nationwide to hold the distinction of “Program of Excellence.” The National Head Start Association awards this honor to organizations that continually demonstrate fiscal responsibility, accountability, and achievement of best outcomes for at-risk children from birth to five years old, pregnant women, families and their communities. Only three other programs have received this honor four consecutive times. Children First leaders and staff are committed to maintaining this dedication to excellence.



Where are they now?

BREANNA GRADUATED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI IN 2016 WITH A BACHELOR'S OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA WITH A MINOR IN MATHEMATICS. STARTING OUT AS A SOCIAL MEDIA INTERN WITH THE TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS, SHE NOW WORKS AS A SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIALIST FOR A COMPANY THAT SUPPORTS NON-PROFIT UNIVERSITIES.



FAMILY ADVOCATES

At the heart of services provided to families enrolled at Children First is family advocacy. Every child and family enrolled at Children First are assigned a professionally-trained Family Advocate for parents and caregivers. Advocates assess each family's needs and help them create action plans to achieve

their parenting, educational, occupational and financial goals. They also identify resources for clothing, housing, and food assistance. All contribute to a more vibrant and empowered life.

16

FAMILY ADVOCATES WORK WITH PARENTS AND GUARDIANS ACROSS 13 LOCATIONS



Finding Her Voice

Do you ever wonder who creates the tweets and posts of your favorite athletic team? If you follow the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, the fingers on the keyboard may have belonged to Breanna Browning.

About the time social media was born, Breanna was running on the playground and reciting the alphabet at Children First. “Every time I come back to visit everyone is so encouraging and inviting,” says Breanna. “They say it takes a village to raise a child—that a support system is indeed crucial,”

Breanna grew into an active high-schooler who competed in track-and-field, volleyball and basketball and went on to earn a Bachelor of Science from the University of Miami in 2016. She worked for the Miami Dolphins in video production before landing an internship with the Buccaneers.

Inspired by their Family Advocate at Children First, Breanna’s mom, Sylvia, completed her Master’s Degree and became a Family Advocate and Family Services Manager.

“As a single working mother, I knew it might be challenging to ensure that Breanna would receive a quality education and a full-time nurturing environment,” says Sylvia. “Coming to Children First helped us both achieve our dreams.”

NUTRITION AND HEALTH SCREENINGS

Many of our families do not have access to good food or nutritional knowledge at home, and some face the challenge of food insecurity. When you give to Children First, you help provide children with a healthy breakfast, lunch, and snack every school day – more than 50%

of each child’s weekly nutritional needs. Children First’s partnerships and volunteers from the healthcare community provide medical, dental, developmental and emotional health screenings for all children, plus referrals for additional services as needed.

188,022

BREAKFASTS, LUNCHES,
AND SNACKS SERVED
IN 2016



“Without Children First, we simply would not be where we are now.”



Where are they going?

JASLENE IS IN 3RD GRADE AND WANTS TO BE A DENTIST. SOPHIA IS IN FIRST GRADE AND LOVES TO READ. ISAAC IS THRIVING AT CHILDREN FIRST, AND IS ON TRACK FOR KINDERGARTEN.

MORE THAN
600
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
SERVED EACH YEAR



Empowering Families

Nine-year-old Jaslene is a bubbly third-grader; her six-year-old sister Sophia is already a bright and inquisitive student. Their younger brother Isaac, age 2, though he has health challenges, also loves school. Parents Alejandra and José say it's all because of Children First.

José and Alejandra, both teenagers when Jaslene was born, took advantage of many of the services Children First offers families, including courses offered through our Families First Institute like Nurturing Dads, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Five Keys to Better Behavior and Positive Solutions for Families.

Alejandra credits the ESOL class in particular for helping her speak better English, which has enabled her to build her own cleaning business. José says he is reminded every day of the values Children First instilled in all of them.

“We talk about keeping our word, making and reaching our goals, and how important these are to building relationships and sustaining healthy lives,” says José.

“We are just so grateful,” adds Alejandra. “Without Children First, we simply would not be where we are now.”

FAMILIES FIRST INSTITUTE

When parents make positive choices, so do their children, enhancing overall family well-being. The Families First Institute provides classes, training, and support to families of the children we serve, as well as those in our broader community. Our team is committed to helping families

become self-sufficient, successful and strong through courses including:

- Nurturing Dads
- Career Readiness for Women
- Positive Solutions for Families
(Taught in English & Spanish)
- Calendar-Based Budgeting
- Kinship Care Support Groups

15%
OF CHILDREN WE SERVE
HAVE DISABILITIES

Getting Ahead, Giving Back

Fitz and Mishya Otis were like many families served by Children First: young parents working and attending college, and wanting a nurturing educational environment for their young son, Fitz, and infant daughter, Milena. When their student family housing suddenly closed, they were forced to relocate and find a new pre-school. A chance meeting led them to Children First, and they were impressed with the emphasis on early childhood education. Today, the kids are doing well in school, and so are they.

Mishya is a home health nurse while studying for her Doctorate of Nursing Practice, and Fitz is an Education Outreach Specialist at a local research facility while earning his Master's degree in Environmental Health and Safety.

Even with busy schedules, they are using their skills to help further the mission of Children First. Fitz currently serves on the Executive Board of the Policy Council and the Health Advisory Committee, playing an active role in their own children's education, as well as advocating for the needs of young families.

"Children First was the right choice for us. The best thing they do is to involve parents in the decision-making," says Mishya. "They work with us as a family."

POLICY COUNCIL

Parents can further their involvement in Children First by serving on our Policy Council. The council is comprised of parents or guardians of currently enrolled children as well as representatives of the community. They meet regularly to guide the direction and content of our services.



Where are they going?

FITZ IS A SMART, CARING
FOUR-YEAR-OLD WHO LOVES
BOOKS AND BUILDING BLOCKS.
HE WILL BE READY FOR
KINDERGARTEN NEXT YEAR.



"The best thing they do is to involve parents in the decision-making. They work with us as a family."

APPROXIMATELY

95

PERCENT OF FAMILIES
ARE AT THE FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL OF

\$24,600

FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR



REMARKABLE RETURN ON INVESTMENT

According to the Rand Corporation, every dollar invested in exceptional quality programs like Children First yields a benefit to society of \$1.80 to \$17.07 in return. Your investment makes a difference not only in the lives of our children today, but in the future of our community.

YOUR IMPACT

Making a lasting impact on the lives of our children costs less than you may think:

- \$1,000 provides 10 children with breakfast, lunch and a healthy snack every school day
- \$2,500 guides parents with instruction on positive behavior techniques
- \$5,000 enriches a classroom of children with computers, field trips, and learning activities
- \$10,000 provides one year of full-day educational programming, nutritional support, health assessments and family support services for a child



Raising a Hand for Children

Whether helping a homeless family find housing or providing a car for a mother in need, John and Elenor Maxheim have been quietly supporting children and families. They are an inspiring example of the many generous members of our community who have provided necessary resources to make sure children in need have the opportunity to succeed.

A member of our Board of Directors, Elenor also served as a co-chair of our Raise Your Hand Campaign to enhance emotional and behavioral support, increase individualized classroom attention, and expand family advocacy services. Thanks to this campaign we have hired a new mental health professional, added a third teacher to every pre-K classroom, created two new infant and toddler classrooms, and employed more Family Advocates.

This year, in recognition of their generosity and dedication to Children First, the “John and Elenor Maxheim Library” at the Dr. Elaine Marieb Early Learning Center was named in their honor.

Thanks to the support of individuals like John and Elenor, Children First is able to strengthen children and families by improving the quality of their lives through a comprehensive approach to development, education, health and well-being.

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The best gift
one can give
to another
is the gift of
opportunity.



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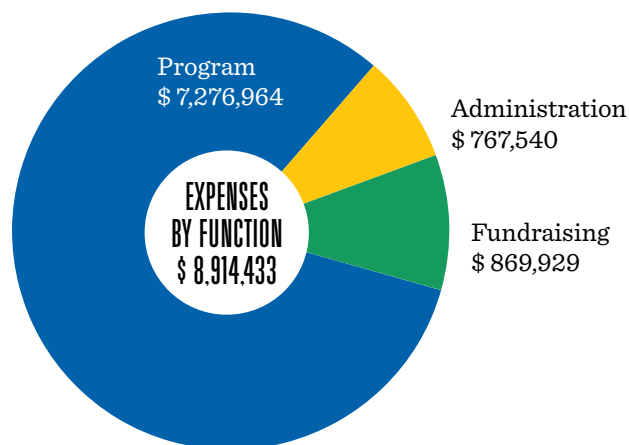
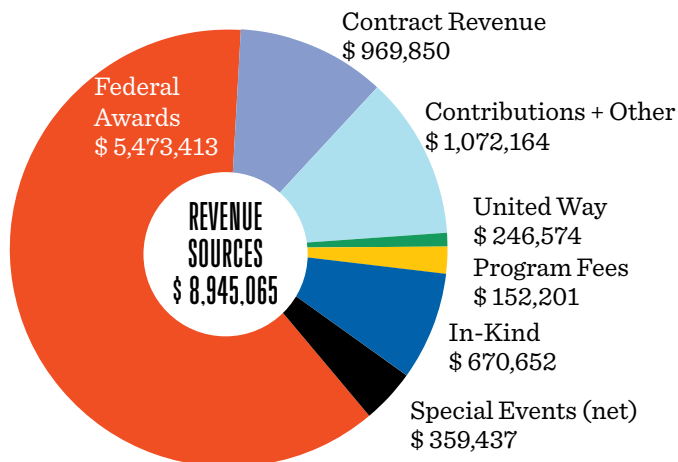
Gifts between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2016

Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

Year Ended December 31, 2016

	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED	TOTAL
REVENUE AND OTHER SUPPORT				
Federal grant revenue	\$5,473,413	-	-	\$5,473,413
Contract revenue	969,850	-	-	969,850
Contributions and other	1,067,711	-	4,453	1,072,164
United Way allocations	121,620	124,954	-	246,574
Program fees	152,201	-	-	152,201
In-kind contributions	670,652	-	-	670,652
Special events — net of direct expenses of \$120,869 and \$140,456	359,437	-	-	359,437
Interest income including gains from investments	774	-	-	774
Net assets released from restrictions:				
Expiration of time/use restrictions	\$ 124,954	(\$124,954)	-	-
Total revenue and other support	8,940,612		4,453	8,945,065
EXPENSES				
PROGRAM SERVICES				
Head Start	3,103,004	-	-	3,103,004
Early Head Start	2,921,579	-	-	2,921,579
Early Childhood Education	1,153,137	-	-	1,153,137
Families First Initiative	74,091	-	-	74,091
Other restricted grants	25,153	-	-	25,153
SUPPORTING SERVICES				
Management and general	767,540	-	-	767,540
Fundraising	869,929	-	-	869,929
Total program and supporting services	8,914,433			8,914,433
Change in net assets before other changes	26,179	-	4,453	30,632
Other changes				
Gain on disposal of assets	-	-	-	-
Change in net assets	26,179		4,453	30,632
Net assets at beginning of year	4,775,652	127,592	80,715	4,983,959
Net assets at end of year	\$4,801,831	\$127,592	\$85,168	\$5,014,591

Children First's 2016 Independent Financial Audit had no findings, adjustments or management letter.



Children First program sites are at full enrollment, serving families who meet the eligibility requirements for Head Start and other programs. Eligibility is based on families living below the federal poverty level or other guidelines which are based on income and family size. Each family is then prioritized for enrollment based on individual needs.

EARLY HEAD START
291

HEAD START
350

AVERAGE MONTHLY ENROLLMENT OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN SERVED

EARLY HEAD START
100%

HEAD START
99%

PERCENTAGE OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN SERVED*

EARLY HEAD START
48%

HEAD START
93%

**reflects children on a waiting list for enrollment*

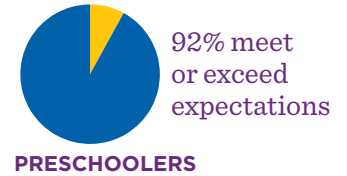
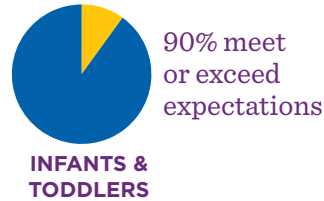
CHILDREN FIRST RANKS IN THE
TOP 1%
OF ALL HEAD START PROGRAMS
NATIONWIDE.

71%
OF PARENTS ARE
WORKING OR
ATTENDING SCHOOL

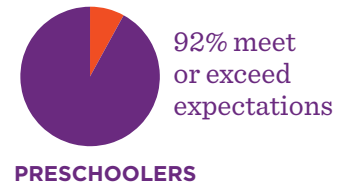
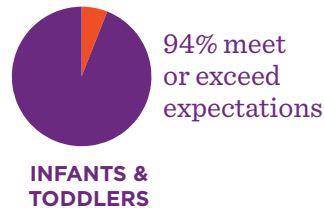
96%
OF FAMILIES
ATTENDED AT LEAST
ONE SCHOOL ACTIVITY

Children First's 2016-17 School Readiness Goals align with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, Florida's Early Learning and Developmental Standards, and the Creative Curriculum GOLD assessment system's Objectives for Development and Learning.

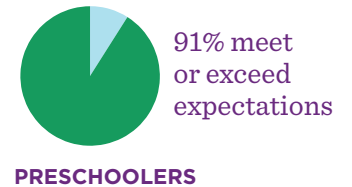
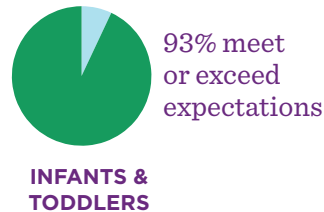
LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION



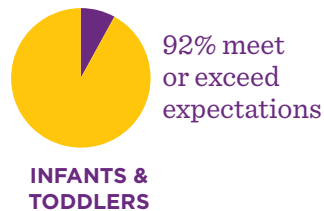
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL



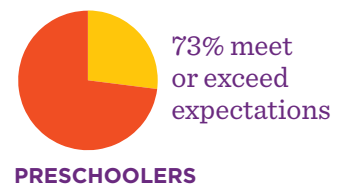
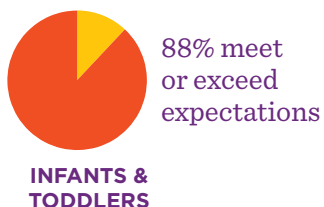
APPROACHES TO LEARNING



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT



COGNITION & GENERAL KNOWLEDGE



Based on end-of-school year assessments



1723 N. Orange Ave
Sarasota, FL 34234

HEAD START



NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MANASOTA, FL
PERMIT #307

Children First has multiple locations throughout Sarasota County, to be easily accessible for children and families in need.

**Dr. Elaine Marieb
Early Learning Center**
1723 N. Orange Ave
Sarasota, FL 34234

Alta Vista Elementary
1050 S. Euclid Ave
Sarasota, FL 34237

Linnie E. Dalbeck EHS Center
2036 Oak St
Sarasota, FL 34237

Emma E. Booker Elementary
2350 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Way
Sarasota, FL 34234

Helen R. Payne Annex
1742 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Way
Sarasota, FL 34234

Helen R. Payne Center
1729 33rd St
Sarasota, FL 34234

North Port Campus
6926 Children Way
North Port, FL 34287

R.O.S.S. Center
1912 N. Orange Ave
Sarasota, FL 34234

Venice Main Campus
800 Gulf Coast Blvd
Venice, FL 34285

CHILDCARE COMMUNITY PARTNERS

School Board of Sarasota County
Riverview High Early Childcare Program
Teen Parent Program—North Port High

Catholic Charities
St. Martha's Early Learning Center
Our Mother's House

UPCOMING EVENTS

Flip Flops & Fashion
Luncheon
Thursday, November 2, 2017
11:00 am
Sharky's on the Pier

Rockin' Lobster
Lobster Boil and Beach Party
Saturday, November 4, 2017
6:30 pm
Sharky's on the Pier

Fairytale Ball
Annual Gala Celebration
Saturday, April 7, 2018
6:30 pm
Michael's On East

www.childrenfirst.net

941.953.3877

