ROBERT F. KENNEDY CHILDREN’S ACTION CORPS

A Massachusetts-based national provider of programs and services for at-risk youth and children, we help individuals and families overcome the results of difficult challenges and situations by providing them the tools and skills they need to be life ready. When it is not possible or advisable to keep vulnerable families unified and children safe in their communities, RFK Children’s Action Corps works to strengthen the family and simultaneously provide the children with a temporary therapeutic living arrangement. All we do at RFK Children’s Action Corps is based on the belief that every child deserves the chance to lead a happy, healthy and productive life.
AT-A-GLANCE

Founded: June 25, 1969
Type of Organization: Private, nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)3, licensed child welfare and juvenile justice agency, approved private schools, foster care and adoption
Structure: Volunteer Board of Directors, operational management by President/CEO
Annual Budget: $17 million
Employees: 300
Children and Families Served: 800+ annually

OUR WORK

Our programs are focused on helping children and adolescents deal with past trauma, develop self-esteem and become contributing members of society. We also provide support services for families and preventative programs for youth living in areas with high rates of violence and crime. We collaborate with numerous state agencies to keep children out of trouble, in school and on a path of healing. We also participate in a number of key partnerships to help advance our mission on a national level.

OUR INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS FALL INTO FIVE CATEGORIES:

- Community-Based Services
- Educational Services
- Adoption Services
- Residential Treatment Services
- Juvenile Justice Services

OUR MISSION

Fiercely committed to Robert F. Kennedy’s legacy of unwavering responsibility to the poor and disadvantaged, RFK Children’s Action Corps advocates for children and embraces all social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds in order to build healthier families, more responsible citizens, safer communities and a more just society for us all.

We believe...

... in the legacy of Robert F. Kennedy—that society has a responsibility to the poor and disadvantaged,
... in respecting the dignity and individuality of every human being,
... that all children have the right to grow up in a safe and nurturing environment,
... that every person has the right to reach his or her full potential.

We carry out our mission and values with:

- **Purpose:** We believe every child has the right to reach his or her full potential. We embrace and honor our relationships with the children, families and communities with whom we work.
- **Hope:** We foster hope within our children, families and communities and believe we are all capable of positive and lasting change.
- **Leadership:** We have an obligation to lead. Childhood is fleeting. We must act now to make a difference for our youth, families and communities to ensure a better tomorrow for everyone.
- **Community:** For children and families to become healthy and resilient, communities must welcome and sustain them. We support communities, so in turn they can better nurture their most vulnerable citizens.
- **Courage:** Our children, families and communities inspire us with their courage in times of enormous hardship and misfortune. We will follow their example as we fight for quality care, adequate funding and system change.
our success
FY13 HIGHLIGHTS
• Keeping the family connected is a key factor in the success of a child. **We helped reunite 90 boys and girls with their families** where the environment was safe and healthy.

• **We created 15 new forever families for 17 infants and children** through our Bright Futures Adoption Center, ensuring loving and stable homes for them.

• **171 teens (including 48 youth involved in DCF)** received their driver’s license through our Cape Cod Youth in Progress Driver’s Education Program. In addition to obtaining a driver’s license, youth participate in community service learning projects. We also had three students from other programs succeed in obtaining their driver’s license.

• **Students across the agency took action with more than 365 hours of community service**, giving back to the community and learning the importance of social responsibility.

• Reversing the path to juvenile crime, DDAP, our Detention Diversion Advocacy Project, achieved a **76% success rate**, and all youth referred to DDAP returned to court for all scheduled court dates.

• Education is the pathway to the future. **We helped more than 90 students achieve their educational goals**, including: earning a high school diploma or GED equivalency, participating in college courses, passing MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) requirements or successfully completing a school year.

• **The Fay A. Rotenberg School marked its 30th anniversary** in 2012, a notable achievement for the program, which has served more than 1,000 young women. In celebration of its service and impact on these individuals, the program hosted a speaker series, inviting local professionals to the school to share their life experiences.

• The Experiment With Travel (EWT) School’s monthly music series was highly successful in providing disadvantaged young people the opportunity to participate in a multi-generation/multi-genre music and dance event. The monthly series featured EWT student performers, as well as performances from local musicians.

• **We partnered with three local colleges to screen “Children of Promise: The Legacy of Robert F. Kennedy,”** a 45-minute documentary produced for Investigation Discovery by NBC’s Peacock Productions, which explores the work of RFK Children’s Action Corps. Screenings and panel discussions were hosted by American International College, Worcester State University and Holyoke Community College, providing a venue for education and dialogue pertaining to child welfare, education and juvenile justice issues our nation currently faces and allowing audiences to see how these issues have remained and changed over time.

• **128 children experienced more than six theater performances, and 215 youth participated in workshops** focused on therapeutic expression through the arts, providing them with experiences every child should have.

• Using funds raised from their annual cookie sale, Girl Scout Troop 35030 at the Fay A. Rotenberg School designed and commissioned a Troop Crest. Featuring a white rose and lightning bolt, the crest is unique to their troop and symbolizes inspiration, creative power and new beginnings.

• Children of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse continued to be a significant resource for presentation, intervention and support groups for communities throughout Massachusetts. Most notably, **we were invited to deliver testimony at the Massachusetts State House before the Committee on Substance Abuse and Mental Health** regarding the needs of family and children impacted by substance abuse.
FROM THE PRESIDENT
DEAR FRIENDS,

The past year has seen a significant rise in media attention focused on child welfare and juvenile justice issues nationwide. On TV, in newspapers and through social media, we see story after story of youth facing insurmountable odds as they struggle in systems that seem to work against them. As news hits closer to home, these cases are no longer just nameless faces and acts happening in other states, towns and neighborhoods.

These are our children. These are their stories.

Now more than ever, the work we do impacts not only the individual, but also families, communities and society as a whole. Like many other agencies in the field, we realize that in order to provide programs and services to those who are most in need, it is necessary to change the way we see ourselves and, in turn, the way we are seen as an organization. As we faced an uncertain future, our Board of Directors recognized the need to develop a targeted strategic plan and partnered with agency leadership to make thoughtful decisions about how we can build upon our proven strengths and successes to ensure our growth and stability. At the forefront of these initiatives is the expansion of our work as a national presence and resource. We are confident about the direction in which we are headed and look forward to further nurturing and developing existing and potential partnerships, while also being able to serve the most vulnerable children and families for years to come.

In a nationwide effort to improve opportunities for youth in and leaving juvenile justice facilities, we partnered with Youth Advocacy Department as well as national groups, including the Robert F. Kennedy Juvenile Justice Collaborative, to discuss education and employment for these individuals. Support for this session was provided by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation as part of the Models for Change program. Additionally, we were thrilled to welcome Thomas Abt as keynote speaker at this year’s annual meeting. Serving as chief of staff to the assistant attorney general for the Office of Justice Programs at the U.S. Department of Justice, Abt shared his experience and hands-on knowledge about the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, the expansion of public and private partnerships and his thoughts on the political landscape of juvenile justice in America.

Here in our home state, we have welcomed significant developments to change the face of child welfare, putting Massachusetts on the path to return to its place as a leader in juvenile justice and child welfare. Spearheaded by the Children’s League of Massachusetts and championed by Sen. Karen Spilka and Rep. Paul Donato, reform to the CHINS (Children in Need of Services) system was signed into law, guaranteeing a voice for children and families and decriminalizing a broken system. Just as important has been the ongoing work of Citizens for Juvenile Justice, with support of the MacArthur Foundation, in getting the Raise the Age bill passed. As of September 2013, 17-year-olds will no longer automatically be held or tried as adults. We commend everyone for their tireless advocacy and applaud legislation for recognizing the importance of these landmark decisions. Their actions will change the way we as providers move forward with our work, creating a lasting impact on the most desperate youth we serve. We continue to be recognized for our innovative programming, and our strengthened partnerships with Department of Children and Families and Department of Youth Services have been a key dynamic in facilitating our efforts statewide.

As you read the profiles on the following pages, you will be inspired by the courage, resilience and strength demonstrated in the most hopeless situations. These are just a few examples of the hundreds of lives that have been changed as a result of our work. However, although their time with us has allowed them to see a brighter future for themselves, their past hurts and trauma will remain with them throughout their lives. Through the ongoing dedication and commitment of our counselors, teachers and caregivers, it is our hope that we can give our children and families the tools to triumph over adversity and that more and more of our stories will have happier endings.

We cannot do this work alone, and we would like to thank our supporters who believe in our mission and make our work possible. Our national experience demonstrates that it takes fully integrated system services, from government agencies to local communities, to successfully assist these individuals and families in rising above their challenges and flourishing as active members of society. Now more than ever, we depend on the generosity of private citizens and corporations as we work toward our goal of becoming a fully independent child welfare agency that reflects the values of Robert F. Kennedy. Together, we all can play a part in helping those children who otherwise may not have the opportunity to heal, survive and thrive. We can give them a voice, and we can give them hope for a better tomorrow.

Edward P. Kelley
President and CEO
COUPLE FINDS PURPOSE IN HEALING CHILDREN

Mark and Kristen Lukens were at home when they got the phone call that changed their lives—a call regarding two children in crisis who needed a home.

The children, Maxim, 6, and Anastasia, 11, were from the Ukraine. They came to the United States when a Massachusetts family adopted them, but the family decided they didn’t want the children because of behavioral issues and barriers in communication. A second placement fell through at the eleventh hour, and the children had nowhere to turn.

“A friend who heard about their situation knew we had spent time doing mission work in Russia and hoped we could take them for the weekend,” said Mark, who serves as a pastor in Norfolk. “Within 24 hours, the family was signing over guardianship to us.”

The first weekend with Maxim and Anastasia was very hard. The children had severe emotional and behavioral issues. But the Lukens were hooked and decided to pursue adoption almost immediately.

“We started calling agencies across the state to help us adopt these children, but no one wanted the liability of another failed placement,” said Mark.
Mark finally reached out to Karen Cheyney, director of Bright Futures Adoption Center, a program of RFK Children’s Action Corps.

"Once I saw how much Karen cared about our family, we knew this was the agency we were supposed to have," said Mark.

Cheyney arranged the formal adoption process, but the transition for the children was not easy. Maxim had the hardest time. He would bite, hit and kick. And both children were ready to run away at a moment's notice.

"We spent the first few months just holding them, trying to get them to calm down and not hurt themselves," said Mark.

The Lukens provided a lot of structure. They homeschooled the children, as they had done with their own children, and they had lots of support from their children and the church community.

"Eventually, they saw that our love was greater than the pain they were causing us," said Mark.

The Lukens describe the past year as one of the busiest and hardest that they’ve experienced, but rewarding as well.

"It’s a privilege to be in their lives, to love them and heal their pain," said Mark.
LANCASTER SCHOOL GIVES YOUNG BOY A SECOND CHANCE, HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Jesus had a history of setting fires, running from his home and making unsafe choices. He began receiving services from RFK Children’s Action Corps in January 2011 after spending much of his childhood in and out of hospital settings and residential treatment facilities. He was only 10 years old.

Jesus had been living with his mother and was physically aggressive toward his siblings. He was impulsive and didn’t seem to comprehend the severity of his behaviors.

“He lacked social skills and would often give flat responses to adults,” said Valerie Paen, Lancaster School principal. “His affect was very flat.”

Jesus was first placed in Stabilization Assessment and Rapid Reintegration (STARR) program, a short-term residential facility.

He moved to the Lancaster program in July 2012 to live and go to school. The comprehensive program addresses various needs, including medical and psychiatric needs.

At first, Jesus struggled with the program. He would run out of class without warning, kick his teacher and rarely completed assignments.

“He had been in so many placements and in and out of so many schools,” said Paen. “He had severe behavioral issues and a lack of self-control.”

Program staff worked with Jesus to hold him accountable for his actions. They began making great strides during family therapy, and Jesus began repairing his relationship with his father.

Everything seemed to click in early 2013. Jesus’ grades were up, and there were fewer behavioral issues. He was discharged from the residential program and moved in with his father and stepmother, remaining a day student at the Lancaster School.

At first, he struggled with his new home life, with a new stepmother and younger sibling at home. He began refusing assignments and missing class. But staff at the school remained in constant contact with his father, and Jesus quickly adapted to his new surroundings.

“I give a lot of credit to his dad,” said Paen. “He’s very forthcoming with us, and we’re in constant communication. We don’t get that from all parents, and it’s really a good thing for everyone to work together and be on the same page.”

Today, Jesus is a leader among his peers. He is on the honor roll, completes all of his assignments and is a member of the school’s soccer team. He is a lot more social, often seen smiling in the hallway and chatting with friends and teachers. He recently won the Lancaster School’s “Most Improved Behavior” award.

“He has made a tremendous amount of progress during the past two years,” said Paen. “He’s really proud of what he’s been able to accomplish; you can tell he feels a lot better about himself.”

agency leadership

STAFF LEADERSHIP
Edward P. Kelley
President and Chief Executive Officer

Alan J. Klein
Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Terence J. Shanley
Senior Vice President of Human Resources and Administration

Letitia L. Howland
Vice President of Organizational Management and Strategy

Cecilia M. Roddy
Vice President of Development and External Affairs

Alden S. Wells
Vice President of Financial Management

Karen B. Cheyney
Director of Bright Futures Adoption Center

Linda Corey
Director of Training

Leigh G. Mahoney
Director of National Education and Program Development

Valerie L. Paen
Principal of Robert F. Kennedy Lancaster School

Ellen S. Solomita
Director of Development and External Affairs

David N. Strong
Director of Juvenile Justice Services

David Tivnan
Director of Operations and Administration, Lancaster Campus

Adrienne E. Williams
Director of Community-Based Services
YOUTH FINDS NEW PATH, BECOMES A LEADER

Orville entered RFK Children’s Action Corps Detention Diversion Advocacy Project (DDAP) when he was 17. He was struggling in school and started abusing drugs and alcohol. He was arrested for possession of marijuana and the judge gave him a choice: DDAP or jail.

“It was a last chance thing,” said Orville. “If I messed up again, I would be committed.”

Juliet Ochoa, youth advocate for DDAP, was assigned to Orville’s case. He was a junior in high school and lived with his parents, who both worked three jobs.

“He was very quiet,” she said. “He was an only child for 15 years before his sister was born, and he struggled with that.”

Orville began living with his grandmother part-time, but his goal was to return home with his parents. Ochoa visited Orville at home and in school. She was scheduled to meet with him three times a week, but she saw him almost daily because she had other clients at his school.

Ochoa made sure Orville was participating in school and working toward his community service hours. She connected him to other organizations in the area and arranged in-home therapy for him, his parents and his grandmother.

“They put me in groups to keep me out of trouble,” said Orville. “They took us bowling, dance parties and stuff out in the community. It was a one-chance thing, so I took it very seriously.”

Ochoa connected him with the Martin Luther King Community Center, which counted toward his community service hours. He began mentoring the younger kids, helping them with their homework and in the gym.

“He started coming out of his shell,” said Ochoa. “The younger children really looked up to him, and he was a positive role model for the other youth in the program.”

Today, Orville is a senior in high school. He plays on the school basketball team and is hoping to go to college. He’s no longer part of the DDAP program, but still sees Ochoa regularly at school.

“He’ll come up to me and show me his grades, and I just keep encouraging him,” said Ochoa. “He’s a great kid and has the potential to be anything.”
agency leadership

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
(serving through June 30, 2013)

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Penny Outlaw, Vice Chair  
Consultant
Paul Woods, Treasurer  
State Street Corporation
Cindy Schlessinger, Clerk  
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The Chiofaro Company
Barry O’Connell  
Amherst College
Stephen H. Peck  
United Benefit Services
Dennis D. Pedra  
Pei Wei Asian Diner
Mary Ann Ryan  
University of Massachusetts
Timothy H. Sullivan  
Related Affordable
Dr. Kim L. Thornton  
Boston, IVF, The Waltham Center
Phyllis A. Wallace  
Retired (Formerly, Nonprofit Leadership Alliance)
Michael Watson  
Girl Scouts of the USA
Robert J. Watson  
Linda M. Williams  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
FAIRWAY FOR KIDS CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

In 2003, Don Anastasia was “retiring” from the RFK Children’s Action Corps Board of Directors. He knew he wanted to remain involved by serving on the RFK Advisory Council, but what he didn’t know was that 10 years later, he would still be making a huge impact on the lives of children in the agency’s programs.

Anastasia had always been an avid golfer, and he agreed to join a committee to create a golf tournament fundraiser to support the agency. This year marked the 10th anniversary of Fairway for Kids, and Anastasia serves as co-chair of the planning committee along with RFK Children’s Action Corps Board Member George Hutt.

“Ten years of anything is a milestone, but for charity golf events that survived the late 2000s economy and coming back stronger than ever is a great testament to our sponsors,” said Anastasia.

“Ten years of anything is a milestone, but for charity golf events that survived the late 2000s economy and coming back stronger than ever is a great testament to our sponsors,” said Anastasia.

The success of the program is credited to significant donors for the past 10 years, including three standing sponsorships from State Street Global Advisors, Boston Trust & Investment Management and Loomis Sayles.

Proceeds support the agency’s general fund, offsetting education enrichment costs such as technology in classrooms, adventure-based learning and therapy, and individual program libraries.

“So many of our children have struggled in traditional schools before coming to us,” said Cecilia Roddy, vice president of development and external affairs. “This event gives our children educational tools and books that can carry them through difficult times.”

Each year, Fairway for Kids culminates with a dinner featuring prizes and a live auction.

“This is always a successful event in terms of fundraising, but it also brings the community into the fold,” said Roddy. “It connects our supporters to the work we do and directly shows them they have an impact on giving children second chances.”
MODELS FOR CHANGE: SYSTEM REFORM IN JUVENILE JUSTICE

RFK Children’s Action Corps continues to provide technical assistance and consultation nationwide as part of the Models for Change: Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice initiative with ongoing support by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. We were selected to develop new resources and provide intensive, on-site consultation nationwide to improve treatment, services and outcomes for youth with prior or current involvement in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems — also known as dual status youth — through a new, private-public partnership between the MacArthur Foundation and the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. This effort continues to focus on increasing awareness of the connection between child maltreatment and juvenile delinquency and the importance of collaborating across multiple systems of care.

NATIONAL YOUTH PROJECT USING MINIBIKES (NYPUM)

NYPUM is a nationwide network of nearly 45 youth development programs sponsored by American Honda Motor Co., Inc. to engage youth and promote their development through an exciting and challenging activity. The program focuses on at-risk children, including children of military service members, young women and girls, and Native American youth. This year, NYPUM launched Armed Services YMCA, a pilot program in Ft. Hood, Texas, with a special focus on youth of military families and the hope to develop similar programs at military bases nationwide. The NYPUM team is also working to build NYPUM as an accredited, evidenced-based program by building a national data-collection system that records positive youth development and achievement. The next phase will start in early 2014 by testing select NYPUM programs in each youth development category: residential, community-based, school-based and government-supported.

ROBERT F. KENNEDY JUVENILE JUSTICE COLLABORATIVE

In partnership with the RFK Center for Justice and Human Rights, RFK Children’s Action Corps continues to increase national attention on the challenges facing youth as they return to the community following time in a juvenile justice facility. This year, we participated in a roundtable discussion with U.S. Congressional staffers in Washington, D.C., and in a series of listening sessions held nationwide that resulted in a briefing to the U.S. Department of Education entitled “Recommendations to Improve Correctional and Reentry Education for Young People.”

THE NATIONAL CRITTENTON FOUNDATION

The National Crittenton Foundation (TNCF) and its family of agencies support girls, young women and their families living at the margin of the American dream. We help these individuals overcome major obstacles rooted in circumstances beyond their control. As a family agency of TNCF, RFK Children’s Action Corps increased its impact on national public policy, particularly in regard to our leadership in juvenile justice and systems integration. RFK Children’s Action Corps staff is currently active in a TNCF group tasked with influencing national policy around services to victims of domestic sex trafficking. Another group focuses on research on the impact of early trauma and its particular effect on girls and young women living at the margin. Our missions and values converge around empowering these individuals through trauma-informed, evidence-based practices that ensure life readiness and lifelong healthy connections. Our youth are encouraged to lead and self-advocate, from driving their treatment plans to telling their stories on Capitol Hill.
FINDING SUCCESS AFTER TRAUMA

Taylor faced sexual abuse at a very young age. She was cutting herself by sixth grade and spent much of her childhood in and out of hospitals because of severe depression and anxiety.

After being hospitalized last fall, she entered the RFK Children’s Action Corps Cape Cod Adolescent Treatment Center, a short-term assessment and stabilization program in South Yarmouth.

Taylor was 17 at the time and was beginning her senior year of high school. The staff provided intensive therapy and helped her with coping and anger management skills.

Taylor progressed in the program and had the option to transition to an independent living program. With the help of staff, she researched several options and settled on Champ House, a transitional home where people live on their own.

RFK Children’s Action Corps provided Taylor with support and stabilization services, which are wraparound services to help her begin to live independently.

Taylor was assigned two mentors, each with a specific plan on what they would focus on, from working on independent living skills, including developing a budget and paying her bills, to applying for college and filling out financial aid forms.

“She’s an incredibly bright girl,” said Christina Gagnon, Support and Stabilization program coordinator. “But many people did not think she would last even a couple of weeks at Champ House because of her history. They thought she...
would do something to end up at the hospital again, but instead she did remarkably well.”

Taylor soon became part of Youth In Progress leadership program, an afterschool program of RFK Children’s Action Corps focusing on leadership skills and building self-confidence, as well as the YIP driver’s ed program. She obtained an internship with the Yarmouth Police Department, held a job and saved up enough money to buy a car.

Taylor graduated from high school in June and is now studying criminal justice at Bridgewater State University.

“This is an incredibly bright girl who could do anything in life,” Gagnon said. “Trauma took that away from her, but now she can really live up to her potential.”

agency leadership

ADVISORY COUNCIL
(serving through June 30, 2013)

Vincent P. McCarthy, Advisory Council Founding Member
Partner (Ret.), Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr, LLP
Susan Allen
The John Drew Company
Donald Anastasia
Eagle Investment Planning
Jim D. Blue, II
The Bostonian Group
James T. Brett
The New England Council
Donald E. Carey
Former RFK Children’s Action Corps Executive Director
Elizabeth Coolidge
Linzee Coolidge
Darrell W. Crate
Easterly Capital, LLC
Michael Croke
Deloitte and Touche, LLP
Lawrence S. DiCara
Nixon Peabody, LLP
W. Albert Ellis
OHC Development, LLC
Brian L.P. Fallon
O’Connor Capital Partners
Robert P. Gittens
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Retired
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Patricia Kennedy
Communications
John W. McKeen
Former RFK Children’s Action Corps Executive Director
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Nessen Associates
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Gonzalo Puigbo
Eastern Bank
Don Rodman
Rodman Ford, Lincoln Mercury
Gregory T. Schmutte, PhD
American International College
Charles Shaughnessy
Actor
Michael J. Summersgill
Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr, LLP
Robert H. Summersgill
Retired
Susan Wornick
WCVB-TV5
FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013
(July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013)

ASSETS

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LIABILITIES

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Revenue

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<td>Department of Children and Families (DCF)</td>
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<td>Department of Youth Services (DYS)</td>
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<td>Cities, Towns and Dept of Ed</td>
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Expenses*

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<td>($169,500)</td>
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* $12.7M or 73% of all expenses are for employee compensation and related items

A copy of the complete audited financial statements prepared by McGladrey & Pullen is available upon request.
WE ARE PLEASED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THOSE WHO MADE CONTRIBUTIONS TO RFK CHILDREN’S ACTION CORPS IN FY2013. (JULY 1, 2012 – JUNE 30, 2013)

We have done our best to ensure the accuracy of this list. If you have changes, please let us know.

$25,000+
American Honda Motor Co., Inc.
Beveridge Family Foundation
Celebration for Kids
Darrell Crate
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Rodman Ride For Kids
Yawkey Foundation II

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