Robert F. Kennedy Children’s Action Corps is a leader in child welfare and juvenile justice, operating a number of programs and services for at-risk youth and families. Our work includes community based initiatives, residential treatment and juvenile justice programs, and we partner with national organizations and state agencies to use proven methods and develop new ways to advance practices in the care of those most vulnerable. We help individuals and families overcome difficult challenges and situations by providing the tools and skills they need to heal, grow, and thrive. Everything we do is based on the belief that every child deserves the chance for a brighter tomorrow.
AT A GLANCE

Founded: June 25, 1969
Type of organization: Private, nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(3), Licensed Child Welfare Agency, Approved Private Schools, Foster Care and Adoption
Structure: Volunteer Board of Directors, operational management by CEO
Annual budget: $18.5 million
Employees: 380
Geography: Six communities across Massachusetts and nationwide
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 agencies to keep children out of trouble, in school and on a path of healing, and we work within the child welfare and juvenile justice systems to promote and enhance system reform.

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 the communities 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 follow their example as we fight for quality care, adequate funding and system change.
“Since coming to RFK, I’m more calm and focused, and I’m doing better in school. I finally have hope.”
FY16 HIGHLIGHTS

Keeping the family connected is a key factor in the success of a child. We helped reunite 200 boys and girls with their families where the environment was safe and healthy.

We created 18 forever families for 26 infants and children through our Bright Futures Adoption Center, ensuring loving and stable homes.

Students across the agency took action with more than 4,965 hours of community service, giving back to the community and learning the importance of social responsibility.

Reversing the path to juvenile crime, our Detention Diversion Advocacy Program (DDAP) served 113 clients and at least 95 percent of youth referred to DDAP returned to court for all scheduled court dates.

Education is the pathway to the future. We helped more than 312 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.

To support our belief that every child should have art in their lives, 92 children experienced more than five theater performances, and 61 youth participated in workshops focused on therapeutic expression, including writing, music, art, acting and dancing.

An incentive-based program that uses minibikes as a motivational tool, NYPUM (National Youth Project Using Minibikes) provided 157 of our students with the opportunity to develop self-esteem, values for daily living, and a sense of teamwork.

Our South Hadley Girls Treatment Program was a recipient of the 2015 Performance-based Standards Learning Institute (PbS) Barbara Allen-Hagen Award. Recognizing agencies whose work exemplifies PbS' commitment to treating each and every youth in custody as our own, the award was presented at the 20th anniversary celebration and awards gala in Indianapolis.

Continuing our active participation as members of the Child Welfare League of America, staff joined the planning committee for CWIA’s national conference in Washington D.C. Leigh Gallivan Mahoney, Director of National Education and Program Development, presented on “Effective Transition Services for Youth with Special Needs in the Child Welfare System.”

In 2016, we acquired the High Risk Youth Network (HRYN). Previously hosted by the Black Ministerial Alliance, HRYN is a resource for organizations and providers serving high-risk youth in Boston. The overall mission of the Network has remained unchanged and we will continue to share best practices among our community of providers and our community at large.

In support of our efforts to offer more programs to girls in Western Massachusetts, we were awarded a grant for $88,000 from the hope & grace fund, a project of New Venture Fund in partnership with the global women’s skincare brand philosophy, inc. Each year, the hope & grace fund awards multiple financial grants to local organizations working to empower women through the promotion of mental health and wellbeing, and the prevention and treatment of related issues.

Children of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (COASA) continued to be a significant resource for presentation, intervention, and support groups for communities throughout Massachusetts, serving nearly 1,000 children and adults. Last summer marked the second year of Camp COASA, a week-long program for children living with the stress of alcohol or other substance use disorders within the home or family.
**LETTER FROM THE CEO**

**DEAR FRIENDS,**

All children deserve a childhood. Because of you and your generous investment in our mission, we have transformed the lives of thousands of youth and their families nationwide.

Our wide range of services: therapeutic, education, adoption, substance abuse, system improvement, and advocacy all have the same goal: we help children and strengthen families.

In FY16, we helped more children in more places. We expanded our stakeholder network, strengthened our community connections, and surpassed our fundraising goals. In launching *New Expectations: The Campaign for RFK Children’s Action Corps* and working toward our $6 million comprehensive campaign goal, we believe we can continue to have a significant impact on how we serve our youth in the future.

For these reasons and more, we celebrate the past year. But, in looking at the present state of child welfare and juvenile justice, we must re-evaluate what we ask of our funders, partners, and supporters – and ourselves – moving forward.

For the past several decades, the Massachusetts child welfare system has been significantly under-resourced; an under investment in our most vulnerable youth. This has resulted in a crisis in our child welfare system, from the availability of quality services to the stability of workforce. So, we are calling for a full review of child welfare in Massachusetts, without assigning blame to the committed state staff who labor in this incredibly difficult environment. We look forward to partnering with committed government leaders to rebuild a well-coordinated, well-resourced system – one that is capable of meeting the needs of children and families, attracting professionals to assure the stable, quality delivery of critical services, and ultimately gaining better outcomes for all.

We are leveraging our nearly 50-year history of directly helping severely traumatized children and families in Massachusetts, along with our more recent work in systemic improvement. Today, we are uniquely positioned to impact both the care and the delivery of services that children receive. Through our continued initiatives and partnerships at both the local and national levels, we aim to work together to improve outcomes and enhance system performance.

The expansion of our efforts, along with the strength of our staff, Board, and leadership, all position us to continue to improve the work we do and secure the future of the agency. As always, this could not happen without the help of supporters and long-standing donors who believe in our organization, our work, and most importantly, that those we serve deserve the opportunity for a better tomorrow.

Despite the obstacles and unimaginable circumstances they face, our children show incredible resiliency. We have proven that with proper treatment, programming, and time, they can heal, grow and become contributing members of society. In turn, our communities are safer and stronger.

As we share the following stories of hope, courage, and triumph in the face of adversity, we are grateful to all those who made them possible and who continue to help us write our next chapters.

Edward P. Kelley
Chief Executive Officer

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**IN MEMORIAM**

We fondly remember Edward J. “Ned” Loughran, long-time Board member, supporter, and champion for children.
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* Deceased
KIARA & IAN’S STORIES

DETENTION DIVERSION ADVOCACY PROGRAM (DDAP)

TWO TEENS REVERSE THEIR PATHS AND LEARN TO LIVE TO THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL
**KIARA’S STORY**

Kiara was 16 when she was charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon. The Dorchester Juvenile Court referred her to the Detention Diversion Advocacy Program (DDAP) at Robert F. Kennedy Children’s Action Corps as an alternative to court-ordered detention. Kiara was a recent victim of sexual assault. Following this trauma, she began having trouble at home, in school and in the community.

“I was in the wrong crowd,” said Kiara. “I missed some school after the assault. I was emotionally stressed.”

Jennifer Calderon, DDAP youth advocate, quickly recognized the challenging situation facing Kiara. “Her charges had to do with her not knowing how to deal with trauma. She didn’t feel comfortable talking to her parents. Her acting out was a way to get attention,” explained Jennifer.

She was bullied about the assault at school. Despite the need for counseling, Kiara was reluctant, refusing to talk to anyone about what had happened.

In time, she formed a strong connection with her youth advocate.

“Jennifer knew how to listen and be patient,” said Kiara’s mother, Ayesha. “She was understanding and calm.”

Kiara began to embrace the pro-social and educational activities available through DDAP. Trips to museums and government buildings helped her develop positive relationships with peers and adults.

Once Kiara opened up about the bullying at school, Jennifer helped with the transition to a new school. That change in her environment was critical to getting Kiara on the right path.

“We’re in the schools. We help inside the home. We’re really dedicated to what we do,” said Jennifer.

“DDAP helped me a lot. It helped me get back on track,” said Kiara. “The young adults who enter this program really get a lot out of this. They learn to pick and choose life’s battles. It helps you become mature. Jennifer was a great mentor. She communicated with me a lot.”

Equipped with a support system and a plan, Kiara grew stronger.

“I really appreciate all the work Jennifer has done,” said Ayesha. “It was hard, but there’s been lots of change and improvement. Kiara has more confidence now and she’s happier. She’s more focused and more involved with our family.”

In June, Kiara’s court cases were closed. She is now 17 and doing well as a senior in high school. She helps out with her family’s hair salon business and also does volunteer work in her community. Kiara is on track to earn her high school diploma and looks forward to pursuing a college degree.

**IAN’S STORY**

Ian was 17 and facing charges for possession of drugs, a dangerous weapon, and operating a vehicle without a license. His probation officer in the Holyoke Juvenile Court referred him to DDAP. Ian was a smart kid, but was rebelling after moving in with his mother. His father and brother moved to Florida and he wanted to stay in Massachusetts to finish his last year of high school.

“It wasn’t easy. I had been living with my dad and brother my whole life,” said Ian. “I didn’t really have a relationship with my mom. We weren’t very close. We didn’t really talk much… I was stressed and started going to school high.”

After several conversations with the adults in Ian’s life, Rosa Santiago, program coordinator for DDAP, discovered the severity of his substance abuse problem.

“I made the referral to substance abuse detox. My goal was to stabilize him and help him succeed,” said Rosa. “Ian took accountability and realized the error of his ways. He was really receptive.”

Ian was reluctant to take the help, but looking back speaks positively of the substance abuse program. “It completely changed my view. I was able to talk to older, smarter people; people who had gone through a similar situation. I knew if they could do it, I could too. They gave me positive insight.”

Ian completed the program and was discharged on his 18th birthday – just in time to graduate from high school. “I was happy to get there and get my diploma. My dad, brother and uncle were there. I was excited. It was a good feeling,” Ian said proudly.

Rosa took additional action to help get Ian on track. She worked with him and his former boss to get his job back. She made a referral for in-home therapy so that Ian and his mom could develop a better relationship.

“Me and my mom are getting along a lot better. We communicate more,” said Ian. “Rosa helped me a lot.”

As part of his court conditions, Ian had a curfew. He wanted something positive to do with his time so he enrolled in summer classes at Holyoke Community College – just a month after receiving his high school diploma.

“He’s a great kid,” said Rosa. “I’m really proud of him.”

In December, Ian was released from DDAP. He is continuing classes at HCC and plans to transfer to a four-year college.

“I got my motivation straight,” said Ian. “I just want to keep myself on the straight path – to strive harder and do the best that I can.”
Ernesto was 17 years old when he began serving time at an adult prison. Faced with multiple charges ranging from distribution to armed robbery, he was considered a high-profile offender. After serving six months, he was offered a plea deal. It included a transfer to Robert F. Kennedy Children’s Action Corps’ Kennedy School – a secure treatment center for boys.
Ernesto was born and lived most of his youth in Northern California. At 15, he decided to live with his mother who had moved to Massachusetts. It wasn’t the safest of neighborhoods, and that's when his life started going downhill.

When asked about those teenage years, Ernesto said, “I think I was with the wrong crowd. I didn’t care about hurting people.”

Thankfully, the Kennedy School is all about rehabilitation. “We want to develop productive citizens,” explained director of juvenile justice services, Emily Daniels. “They are not there to do time.”

For Ernesto, it took some time to build trust in the program and suppress his violent behavior. Emily was the second program director during his 26 months at the Kennedy School. Most residents are there for about a year, so his situation was unique.

Emily recalled when she first arrived. “There were only four boys. They were all manipulative,” she said. “That quickly changed around when they realized I wasn’t leaving. We had meetings daily. Rules and routine were implemented. That was what we needed to do.”

Over time, Emily made an impact. The boys learned accountability. They participated in daily school, individual and group counseling, and structured activities designed to promote responsibility and self-reliance.

“She helped me grow,” said Ernesto. “It meant a lot to know she was concerned about my well-being.”

Ernesto started working with the program. He took initiative in making the school a better place, from painting to mopping floors and cleaning rooms.

“I started to advocate against the fighting that I was the catalyst for,” said Ernesto. “It helped click with others. As a peer, I could reach them better. I wasn’t above or beneath them. I was able to tell them, ‘We’ll pull through. We can stick this out.’ People were receptive. They called me a leader. I didn’t want any of us to end up back there.”

He genuinely cared about the other residents, and the staff grew to rely on his leadership. His perspective and experience was invaluable.

He also had lots of support from his family, but sometimes distanced himself. “There would be times where I would regress,” Ernesto recalled. “I didn’t want my family to see me incarcerated. Or to see them going through security to visit. I wanted to grow as much as possible independently.”

“Ernesto made a lot of progress in his time with us. His participation was very positive,” Emily explained, though she holds optimism for all the kids. “All of the young men, with a little bit of guidance, they will succeed in this world.”

In March 2015, Ernesto transitioned from the Kennedy School to a less restrictive step-down program. He completed that program and returned to his mother’s home that May.

Education is important to Ernesto and his family. He went through the GED program at the Kennedy School and obtained his high school equivalency credential one week after he left. “I passed with flying colors,” he said proudly.

Recognizing his environment would be challenging, Ernesto decided to move to San Francisco and live with his father and younger siblings once he turned 21. “I need to show my younger siblings they can succeed. I need to be a big brother,” he said. “I had to make a decision on who I was going to become. I thought, ‘This is my last chance.’ When I came home, I was focused on doing something good.”

Today, Ernesto is working at a t-shirt shop owned by his family. Starting college was a major feat. Schools were apprehensive about accepting a high-profile offender. He had to go through a special program to prove he had changed his life around. In August 2016, he enrolled at San Francisco State University.

“Our work doesn’t finish,” said Emily. “I’m helping him find scholarships. I’m so proud of him.”

“I tell myself, ‘You’re dedicated. You’re doing everything.’ I think the Kennedy School helped me recognize that I had those qualities,” said Ernesto. “Ultimately, what I want is stability. I genuinely believe that every person that’s been through prison or the juvenile system has an ability to succeed. It’s more about having the ability to recognize it.”

Ernesto remains committed to bettering himself and building a successful future. “I want to get into teaching,” he said. “I want to lead effectively and support my community.”
ASHA'S STORY

EXPERIMENT WITH TRAVEL SCHOOL (EWT)

YOUNG WOMAN FLOURISHES IN SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

A CHALLENGING CHILDHOOD

Asha was a frail one-year-old when she was adopted from India by moms Lindsay and Barbara in Massachusetts. Suffering from a serious heart defect, her medical trauma was severe. She underwent multiple heart surgeries as an infant and had a stroke after one. Miraculously, she recovered well physically. But it was difficult to determine her mental setbacks until she was older.
As Asha grew, her learning disabilities became evident. Diagnosed as bipolar with primary depression, she struggled to fit in a traditional educational setting. “She was extremely isolated and depressed, and prone to rages,” recalled Barbara. “There were periods we would refuse to leave the house. At school, she would throw things or start screaming and yelling in the middle of class.”

At the end of fourth grade, Asha refused to go to school for six months. She had little control over her emotions. By sixth grade, Barbara described Asha as “grossly suicidal.” She had three psychiatric hospitalizations for suicide attempts.

It was clear she needed more support, but there were few intense therapeutic programs in the area. She attended a specialized private school for three years that focused on short-term rehabilitation.

**FINDING AN EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY**

At 15, Asha began searching for the next educational step with her mothers. They were seeking a small, personalized community, focused on building independence. In September 2012, they found the Robert F. Kennedy Children’s Actions Corps’ Experiment with Travel School (EWT).

“Initially, Asha mostly asserted her right to refuse. She usually said ‘no’ to any opportunity to participate,” said Rebel McKinley, program director at the EWT School. “Today, Asha is the most transformed student I can think of. A big piece of her growth has been getting rid of the negativity and learning her own interests. She’s come into her own as an independent young woman.”

“Very slowly, Asha began to see herself in a community,” said Barbara. “Even after a really hard day, Asha could identify something positive. There was an enormous change in her vocabulary and sense of possibility.”

Asha began taking on academic challenges with fervor. She became goal-oriented. She earned her certificate of attainment and looks forward to earning her high school diploma. She has passed two of the three MCAS tests in English and science and is working on her third in math.

“School has been very hard for me,” said Asha. “When I came to EWT, they showed me how to study. I did 40 pages of math a week. I never thought I would be able to do that.”

“I never thought that she would develop persistence in tackling academics that are hard. She spent the summer studying and producing math every day in school,” said Barbara. “Her teacher has convinced her that she can pass [the MCAS]. She’s failed four times. I never thought she could devote so much attention to something that is so hard for her.”

**TRANSITIONING AND LEADING**

Last fall, Asha entered the Transition Program within the EWT School. She gained work experience at the Community Survival Center, Holyoke Rows, Kate’s Kitchen and Meals on Wheels. She also helped create the school’s Dressed to the Nines boutique – which distributes clothing free of charge to youth in need.

“We started our own retail ‘store’. We did everything to prepare the storefront,” Asha explained. “We bring in different shipments of clothing that are donated by Dignity U Wear. We learned how to sort clothes, do inventory and paint. It was a great experience.”

With a resume filled with work experience through the Transition Program, Asha was able to get a job at an art supply store where she continued to build her experience in a retail environment.

Asha has also become a leader in the EWT community. “She is known for being a peer mentor,” said Rebel. “She has helped new students become more comfortable at the school and works particularly well with students with anxiety who respond to her kind, low key, supportive style.”

“It’s a lot of fun helping get people out of their shells. I used to be kind of shy,” said Asha. “It’s a learning experience for me too. You have to find different ways to open up to people.”

**A PROMISING FUTURE**

Now 20, Asha will be graduating from EWT in June 2017.

“This will be a difficult goodbye for the staff and students, but we are so proud of the tremendous gains Asha has made,” said Rebel. “Part of our final year is getting her confident and ready to go.”

“It’s been an amazing five years,” Asha said about her time at the EWT School. “It’s helped me shape who I am now. I’ve grown up a lot. Becoming a young adult has opened so many doors for the world. I know what it means to have a good education, to advocate and to work hard.”

“I’m confident that there is a place for her in adulthood. That she will be a contributing member of the community with a career,” said Barbara. “We’re taking the lead from Asha. It’s very clear that she’s ready.”

Asha looks forward to securing a retail job and taking college classes. She has developed many passions – from photography to cooking and baking. You can find some of her photos throughout this report.
FAMILY PAYS IT FORWARD, OPENING THEIR HEARTS AND HOME TO YOUNG GIRL

A PATH TO ADOPTION

Mia was only three years old when she was first removed from her biological mother’s home due to abuse and neglect. She lived with her grandmother for some time, but the situation wasn’t any better. Eventually, protective services got involved and Mia was placed in a foster home.

Years later, in what seems like another world, Michelle and Byron Godfrey began considering adoption. They already had two biological children. Taylor, their oldest, had graduated college and they were seeking a younger child to raise alongside their six-year-old daughter, Jordan.

“We felt like we had more love to give,” said Michelle. “We had room in our house and our hearts.”
For the Godfreys, life is all about giving back. They both have careers in public services focused on helping youth and families. “We come from real humble beginnings – the both of us,” explained Michelle. “We were lucky to escape the traumas of childhood.”

An African American couple, they wanted to give back by adopting a child of color. “There are things we understand from a cultural perspective. It helps to have people who look like you in your life,” said Michelle. “All kids need a home. Any kid in the system needs a mother and father.”

In 2015, officially ready to make their desire to expand their family a reality, the Godfreys embarked on Massachusetts Approaches to Partnership in Parenting (MAPP) training at RFK Children’s Action Corps’ Bright Futures Adoption Center. Facilitated by program director Karen Cheyney, the intense training took place twice a week for five weeks.

“Karen gave us all the information. She left the door open to ask every question imaginable,” said Byron. “Our workers have no more than five family cases at a time,” said Karen. “That’s a huge difference in accessibility. We are very responsive and families are matched very quickly.”

In June 2015, the Godfreys started talking to Karen a lot about a certain little girl that could be their perfect match. Mia was now six years old and continuing to live in foster care. That August, the time had come for her to meet what could be her forever family. The plan was to start slow and meet together for an hour at a park, but it evolved into spending a whole day together.

On their first encounter, Mia and Jordan quickly hit it off at the park. It was a hot summer day and the parents soon realized that they couldn’t keep the girls outside all day.

“We went to our house to cool down. The dog, Simba, helped ease everyone. Mia loved him right away,” recalled Michelle. “We have a treehouse, a trampoline and a small above-ground pool. Mia came out the bathroom and saw our yard. Her eyes lit up.”

The two girls ran into the yard and played. They all enjoyed a dinner together and Mia returned to the foster home that night.

**BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY**

Mia came to live with the Godfreys one week after that initial visit, allowing her to start the new school year on time. Karen continued to work with the family and provide support.

“We talked on the phone and emailed regularly. We did monthly visits to check in on things,” said Karen.

The parents were creative with how they handled the new family dynamics. “We made a choice to put the girls in the same room together,” said Michelle. “They weren’t born sisters, but they had to develop a relationship. They quickly grew attached and started behaving very much like sisters – 80 percent of the time loving each other; 20 percent blaming and arguing.”

Mia’s trauma was deep. It was challenging to communicate her feelings. The abuse and neglect has taken a toll on her short life and outbursts were common. Mia was not able to handle a typical timeout so Michelle came up with a creative solution. she called “calm down jars” made with mason jars, lots of glitter, water and glue. Both Mia and Jordan felt soothed after shaking the jars and slowly watching the glitter fall.

That September, the girls started school together. Mia is a mere six months younger than Jordan, but her emotional and social skills were far less developed. The parents decided to hold Mia back to repeat first grade. Now they are in separate grades with no competition and both are excelling.

**BRIGHT FUTURE A REALITY**

“Our daughter, Mia, has come so far. Her growth in a year is insane – especially her emotional growth,” said Michelle. “She can identify so many feelings. She loves school. Her demeanor is so different. She’s a happy kid. It’s been amazing to watch all that stuff happen. She had so many hidden strengths.”

Michelle and Byron look forward to finalizing their adoption of Mia in the coming months.

“We want her to keep learning and growing strong,” said Byron. “We want to provide her with every opportunity to find her niche.”

“I see Mia becoming a really strong, confident, able young woman without any crutches – with a really great heart,” said Michelle. “It’s really important to us that our kids are good people.”
YOUTH GIVE BACK

Last summer, staff and residents at our Cape Cod program were honored to volunteer with several local organizations. They kicked off the season by volunteering at the Fifth Annual Yarmouth Summer Celebration, sponsored by the Yarmouth Chamber of Commerce. Youth assisted with set up for both the ice cream social and the beach party BBQ and were able to enjoy the fun themselves once their work was done.

In August, they had the privilege of helping at the 32nd National Night Out Against Crime, hosted by the Yarmouth Police Department. Our kids helped out on Veterans Appreciation Day, working with Veterans Voice Radio and MassVets Music Fest at Battleship Cove in Fall River. They talked with veterans and explored the exhibits – including the USS Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. on which Robert F. Kennedy served while in the Navy. Through the Masonic Military Assistance Program, they also volunteered at Veterans Field Day. Veterans and their families enjoyed a cookout, activities and music.

We cannot say enough about all that these organizations do for the community and we are thankful that our kids have the opportunity to learn the importance of giving back first-hand.

COMCAST CARES ABOUT KIDS

In April, over 100 volunteers joined us for Comcast Cares Day at our Cape Cod program. Volunteers spent the day painting, cleaning and landscaping. In support of Comcast employee participation, we were also awarded a grant for more than $2,000. We are grateful for the support of Comcast. Their efforts make our kids feel at home and ensure they have a clean, comfortable place to live.

LOCAL CHURCH PROVIDES HOPE

Over the past year, members of Hope Church of West Yarmouth have gone above and beyond in helping transform the interior of our Cape Cod program into a more welcoming and calming space for the boys and girls living there. In addition to making updates to the common area and securing donations of furniture, paint and supplies, they also built a special space where our residents are able to create unique works of art.

EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION HELPS KIDS REACH NEW HEIGHTS

Over the last year, youth at our Cape Cod program were provided unique experiences courtesy of the Experimental Aircraft Association’s Ultralight Chapter 62 in Plymouth, Massachusetts. They first attended the annual Fly-In last August, viewing several ultralight and light sport aircrafts onsite. The following month, they had the opportunity to participate in a flight lesson at Plymouth Airport, where they were able to learn about aircrafts, the science of flight, and actually take the controls while in the air! This June, the youth participated in the EAA UL Chapter 62 Young Eagles Rally, where they took flight in a Cessna and were once again able to help fly an aircraft. It was a memorable experience and each kid was awarded a certificate of completion for the event.
ABOUT CAPE COD ADOLESCENT TREATMENT CENTER

Robert F. Kennedy Children’s Action Corps’ Cape Cod Adolescent Treatment Center is located in South Yarmouth, Massachusetts. Our services include crisis intervention, individual/family therapy and respite to youth ages 12-17 from the Cape and Islands. Youth are referred by the local area Department of Children and Families and are typically in the program for 45 days. They work through a range of issues including substance abuse, truancy, domestic violence and aggression. We provide a safe, encouraging environment in which youth have the opportunity to overcome challenging circumstances. Support and stabilization services are also offered to youth and families as they transition from the program back into the community.
Since 2013, the RFK National Resource Center has supported state and local jurisdictions. We are making strides in improving outcomes for youth and families involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Our array of technical assistance services, publication resources, and national symposia is expanding. We are reaching representatives throughout the country, as far away as Alaska and the Territory of Guam. Our focus remains on dual status youth (children who have been touched by both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems) and their families, probation system reform, and information sharing projects. Requests for our services and resources are nearly outpacing our current capacity, a desirable dilemma. We are delighted to maintain ongoing partnerships and to develop new partnerships with esteemed youth serving organizations, further enhancing our standing in the field. Our work continues to be influenced by the expertise of our Dual Status Youth and Probation System Reform Practice Networks. These networks are composed of local leaders who have championed reform within their jurisdictions.

YEAR OF INAUGURAL EVENTS

Inaugural Symposia
In April 2016, the RFK National Resource Center hosted its inaugural Dual Status Youth and Probation System Reform Symposia. Nearly 500 participants from throughout the country gathered in Boston. They learned about reform efforts and innovative practices that have been implemented in jurisdictions across the nation. Attendees applauded these events with enthusiasm, especially for the tangible applicability of the content. We acknowledge the members of our Dual Status Youth and Probation System Review Practice Networks for supporting the development, planning and success of these events.

Juvenile Probation Reform Academy (JPRA)
The RFK National Resource Center led the first ever Juvenile Probation Reform Academy (JPRA). We hosted in partnership with the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) and Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center. Through a competitive application process, 33 professionals from across the country participated. They learned effective methods to reduce recidivism, improve outcomes for juveniles, and how to conduct a comprehensive review of their juvenile probation department. The JPRA was well-received and set the stage for a successful Second Annual JPRA in July of 2016.

DUAL STATUS YOUTH REFORM

Our Dual Status Youth (DSY) Reform initiatives improve outcomes for children and families who have been touched by both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. This year, we worked in four competitively selected sites: Anchorage, Alaska; El Dorado County, California; Fulton County, Georgia; and, Marion County, Indiana. This was part of our Dual Status Youth Technical Assistance Initiative. Building off of the success of this initiative, six new sites will receive training on implementing Dual Status Youth Reform.

Serving Commercially Sexually Exploited Children in San Diego County, California
The RFK National Resource Center formed a partnership with the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL). Together, we support San Diego County’s efforts to better serve Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC). We assist with navigating data collection and evaluation challenges. We also identify resource needs and suggest enhancements to the county’s existing CSEC protocol.

PROBATION SYSTEM REFORM

Our service and support to juvenile probation departments continues to extend and garner interest throughout the county. We continued to conduct Probation System Reviews in three Illinois counties and in the Territory of Guam. We also began Probation System Reviews in two Idaho counties.

Our partnership with the CSG Justice Center and APPA expanded in FY16, thanks to support of a new grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The grant, Smart on Juvenile Justice: Community Supervision Training and Technical Assistance Program, supports the provision of technical assistance and comprehensive training. It serves five states (Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Massachusetts, New York) and the Territory of Guam. Our goal is to implement evidence-based reform strategies, reduce recidivism, and improve outcomes for youth on probation.
INFORMATION AND DATA SHARING REFORM

Sharing data and information can challenge collaborative efforts. The RFK National Resource Center provides on-the-ground support — nationally and in our home state of Massachusetts. We have developed tools and resources to help jurisdictions tackle this vexing issue.

In 2016, we released a new online course, Information Sharing in Youth and Family Serving Systems. This course is designed for attorneys and juvenile court judges. It utilizes video presentations from expert faculty and practitioners, interactive scenarios, practice games and assessments. It also provides continuing legal education (CLE) credit.

DUAL STATUS YOUTH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE INITIATIVE

- El Dorado County, CA
- Santa Clara County, CA

DUAL STATUS YOUTH REFORM

- San Diego, CA – Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Project

PROBATION SYSTEM REVIEW

- Twin Falls County, ID
- Jefferson County, ID

DUAL STATUS YOUTH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE INITIATIVE

- Beltrami County, MN
- Ramsey County, MN
- White Earth Indian Nation, MN

NATIONAL & FEDERAL ACTIVITIES

Last year, we shared that Associate Executive Director Jessica Heldman participated in a Congressional Staff Briefing. She served on a panel of experts on dual status youth. As a result, senior staff at the RFK National Resource Center began conversations with staff from Senator Gary Peters’ (D – Michigan) office. He wanted to author a bill to help states identify and respond to the needs of dual status youth. We were honored to support Senator Peters and his staff in developing the specific language included in the Childhood Outcomes Need New Efficient Community Teams (CONNECT) Act. Elements from the CONNECT Act were also incorporated into the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. ESSA recognizes the importance of the Department of Education’s leadership in efforts on behalf of dual status youth.

PROBATION SYSTEM REVIEW

- DuPage County, IL
- Ogle County, IL
- 2nd Judicial Circuit, IL

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* Served in partnership with the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center and American Probation and Parole Association (APPA), through the support of the Smart on Juvenile Justice: Community Supervision Training and Technical Assistance Program grant.
NATIONAL YOUTH PROJECT USING MINIBIKES (NYPUM)

NYPUM is a national network of youth service agencies dedicated to developing youth through a very unique goal-oriented mentoring program. Generously supported by American Honda Motor Co., Inc., 34 programs in almost 20 states use NYPUM-trained adults to teach kids how to safely and legally ride trail bikes in preparation for sharing in some great outdoor riding experiences.

NYPUM originally focused on at-risk youth but has expanded its program to reach youth of military service members, young women and girls, and Native American youth. Among the initiatives accomplished this year, NYPUM launched an exclusive program for young women called Shifting Forward. Created by RFK Children’s Action Corps’ adventure-based counseling coordinator and a senior clinician, it is dedicated to the collaborative discovery and study of self-esteem in girls. NYPUM is also building a campaign to open multiple NYPUM programs in the state of California through a partnership with California State Parks and public safety agencies.

ROBERT F. KENNEDY JUVENILE JUSTICE COLLABORATIVE

Robert F. Kennedy Juvenile Justice Collaborative, a project of RFK Human Rights and RFK Children’s Action Corps, seeks to improve re-entry supports and success for justice-involved youth. The Collaborative advocates for more effective federal youth re-entry policies and partners with young people, national and community stakeholders, and policy makers to do this work. Through the Collaborative, we increase national attention on the challenges facing young people as they return to the community from the justice system. Over the past year, the Collaborative has worked with its partners and youth leaders to improve re-entry outcomes for justice system-involved youth, specifically around the issues of access to education, healthcare, and other re-entry supports, as well as the over-criminalization of youth.

Throughout the year, the Collaborative lent its voice to juvenile and criminal justice reform efforts, including the introduction of a bill by Senator Cory Booker [D-NJ] called the “Maintaining Dignity and Eliminating Unnecessary Restrictive Confinement of Youths (MERCY) Act of 2015.” The MERCY Act would help protect children from the harmful consequences of solitary confinement in both federal and state juvenile facilities. The Collaborative brought young people impacted by the juvenile justice system to Washington, D.C. to speak with Senator Booker’s staff before the introduction of this bill. They shared the serious consequences that solitary confinement had on their lives while in and upon re-entry from the system. These experiences traumatized them emotionally and physically. They were prevented access to education and other needed supports and services while confined.

As part of its ongoing focus on education, the Collaborative educated bipartisan Congressional offices to secure provisions to improve access to education and re-entry supports for justice system-involved youth. The bill reauthorizing the K-12 education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), was enacted into law in December 2015 with such provisions.

Since passage of this important education and civil rights law, the Collaborative has worked with its partners and allies to ensure robust implementation of these provisions. We developed a fact sheet explaining provisions of the new law and provided public testimony and submission to the Department of Education. Two sets of ESSA implementation comments were co-developed and gathered dozens of supporters who signed on to the submissions. Additionally, the Collaborative hosted a webinar to help explain the changes in ESSA and to field questions from the justice and education communities. The Collaborative continues to work with the Department of Education and its community partners to ensure that ESSA protections for justice system-involved youth are fully implemented.

To continue our work promoting youth voice, needs, and experiences, the Collaborative co-hosted a session with Congressman Lacy Clay [D-MO] at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s Annual Legislative Conference in September 2015. The session – entitled “Halting the Criminalization of Adolescence: Youth Perspectives and Best Practices to Improve Youth Health, Justice, and Education” – was inspirational. The Collaborative identified and worked with several justice system-impacted youth from cities touched by violence or uprisings to present on issues affecting their re-entry and life success.
As part of our outreach to new partners and stakeholders concerned about youth re-entry and access to education, we accepted an invitation to moderate a panel on re-entry for justice system-involved youth at the 2016 National Urban League Conference. The Collaborative worked with the Urban League to develop this panel and secured key speakers, including OJJDP Administrator Bob Listenbee; Alton Pitre, a senior at Morehouse College with whom the Collaborative works on advocacy in this area; and Congressman Bobby Scott (D-VA), one of Congress’ leading experts on youth justice reform, who delivered opening remarks.

Finally, to advance another important youth re-entry goal – improved access to health care – the Collaborative worked with Congressman Tony Cardenas (D-CA), another key Congressional expert on youth justice reform, to advise his office on how to improve access to Medicaid for youth re-entering the community. This collaboration resulted in the bipartisan introduction of the “At-Risk Youth Medicaid Protection Act,” a bill to improve access to Medicaid coverage and health services for young people re-entering the community from the justice system. The Collaborative will work towards passage of this bill with Congressman Cardenas, his co-sponsor Congressman Griffith (R-VA), key stakeholders and supporters.

THE NATIONAL CRITTENTON FOUNDATION (TNCF)

The National Crittenton Foundation has been the leading agency for girls and young women for over 130 years. RFK Children’s Action Corps joined the Crittenton family of agencies in 2012, where together we began our work to ensure that girls and young women across the country have the support needed to heal and thrive. While assessing the landscape and holding close its mission, TNCF has experienced many successes and extended its presence within the communities it serves.

It now has a forum for peer learning and support for Eastern-based TNCF members in Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Greater Washington D.C. Organized by Crittenton Services of Greater Washington, the first meeting of this cross training group was held in Metro D.C. in July 2015, with workshops led by executives from Crittenton Services, West Virginia. Gender-responsive, trauma-informed practices for professionals (ARC Model), Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACES) and best practices for gender and culturally-responsive program delivery were central topics.

Additionally, TNCF facilitated part of a research project conducted by the Center for Gender and Justice, Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality, and Trauma Center at the Justice Resource Institute. Our South Hadley Girls Treatment Program participated in Voices: A Program of Self-Discovery and Empowerment for Girls curriculum, with the added component of trauma-informed yoga. The objective of the study was to compare outcomes of girls enrolled in the traditional course to those who also included yoga into the programming. Upon surveying our residents, it was found that incorporating yoga at the end of each session was beneficial. It helped our girls reduce stress, provided an emotional release, and brought them back to their baseline before they continued with the rest of their day.

We continue to strive and develop initiatives and program models targeting the needs of girls and young women that will foster health and wellness through positive youth development.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS (NACOA)

Since 1995, our Children of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (COASA) program has been a local affiliate of the National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACoA). The national nonprofit 501(c)(3) membership and affiliate organization works on behalf of children of alcohol and drug dependent parents. They believe that no child should grow up in isolation and without support, and their mission is to eliminate the adverse impact of alcohol and drug use on children and families.

One of our COASA program goals is to educate communities about children of alcoholics and other substance users. We encourage people to come forward and learn more about the impact of this disease on the family. Our program collaborates with other local organizations to bring support to children and families, utilizing evidence-based materials developed by NACoA. Each year, we invite the Mayor of Boston to proclaim the week of Valentine’s Day the Children of Alcoholics Week, bringing attention to this often overlooked population.
ASSETS

Current assets
Cash $527,618
Other current assets 2,773,199
Total current assets 3,300,817

Other assets
Property and equipment 5,732,455
Long-term investments 2,119,966
Other assets 1,322,518
Total other assets 9,174,939

Total assets $12,475,756

LIABILITIES

Current liabilities $2,124,131
Other liabilities (long term debt) 5,048,846
Total liabilities 7,172,977

TOTAL NET ASSETS $5,302,779

REVENUE AND EXPENSES

Revenue $20,182,728
Department of Children and Families (DCF) 8,392,881
Department of Youth Services (DYS) 4,548,933
Cities, towns and Department of Education 3,613,819
Contributions, gifts and grants 1,895,150
Other (investments, misc.) 1,731,945

Expenses* $19,738,405
Program expenses 16,138,670
General and administration 2,245,766
Fundraising 1,353,969

FISCAL YEAR 2016 SURPLUS $444,323

* $14 million or 71 percent of all expenses are for employee compensation and related items.
A copy of the complete audited financial statements prepared by McGladrey is available upon request.
We are pleased to acknowledge those who made contributions to RFK Children’s Action Corps in FY2016.

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

$100,000–
Joan and Steve Bellin
Beth and Unzor Coolidge/Dusky Foundation
Susan and James E. Geraghty and Family
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Jackie and Stephen Peak
Rodman Ride for Kids

$50,000–
American Honda Motor Company
Brown & Brown of MA, LLC
Amy and Darrell Crate
Frances Pew Hayes Family Foundation
Sharon and Marc J. Jones
Joseph E. and Rosemarie Corcoran Family Charitable Foundation
New Venture Fund

$25,000–
Maureen and Dick Bolger
Mary and John J. Boyle, III
Jane and Keith Carroll
Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts
Melanie Doner and Samuel E. Bouton
Beverly and Phil Johnston
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
Cecilia Raddy and Pete Vlaco
Cindy Schlessinger and Jeff Ellowitz
Kim L. Thornton
Yawkey Foundation II

$10,000–
Beveridge Foundation
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UMass Building Authority
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University of Massachusetts Boston
Linda Williams

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AFCEA Education Foundation
Shari Leigh Agastain
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Margaret and Donald Anastasia
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Beal Family Foundation
Because Jake Lived Foundation
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Terence Bradshaw
Sharon and Thomas Burke
The Cape Cod Foundation
Citizens Bank/Healthcare & Non Profit Group
Citizens Energy
Fred Di Spirito
Joanne and Kevin Ercegovic/Goudy Family Foundation
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Lowell Five Cent Savings Bank
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Kristin and Lou Montanti
Mary and Steve Morikawa
Nancy Allison Perkins Foundation
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Quincy Geneva Housing Corporation
Suzanne Ridge
Rotary Club of Nashoba
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$500–
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Ronna and Michael Benjamin
Margaret and Nicholas Brill
Elizabeth and Ronald Campbell
Mary Carlin and Michael Costello
Emma and Dan Carpenter
Clintion Savings Bank
Ellen and Michael Clisham
Design Temperature Control Inc.

Photo credit: Asha
Steve Peck first became acquainted with RFK Children’s Action Corps nearly twenty years ago. After learning more, he came on as a Board member and quickly realized the importance of the work that was being done. In meeting the kids in our programs, he said, “It doesn’t take long to figure out. They come from the worst of circumstances, and no one else is going to help.”

Having worked with numerous human services agencies over the years, Steve credits our staff and the commitment leadership has in successfully carrying out the mission of giving young people the chance for a better life. “For them, it’s not just business, it’s a passion,” said Steve. “It’s a special kind of person who wants to do this work.”

As his role with the Board has grown to include Chair of the development committee, he has seen a definite shift in focus of the group. “They now recognize that increased revenue raised by development is important to the success of the agency,” said Steve. “They understand that part of their job is to be a voice and provide fundraising opportunities.”

With last year’s launch of New Expectations: The Campaign for RFK Children’s Action Corps, he now also works closely with the campaign steering committee to ensure that the agency reaches its financial goal and is well positioned for the future. He and his wife Jackie made a significant multi-year gift to the campaign, knowing it will be used in the most effective way to change lives. “I have 100% confidence that the money will go as far as it can to help those who need it most,” he said.

Another reason they choose to support at this level is the impact that a substantial gift has on an agency of our size. “For an organization like RFK Children’s Action Corps, our gift makes a real difference,” said Steve.

In addition to his leadership role on the Board, Steve also participates on the Board Nominating and Governance Committee, Executive Committee, and Embracing the Legacy and Fairway for Kids events committees each year. “Steve is a true leader,” said Ed Kelley, CEO. “We are incredibly fortunate to have someone like him who is not only a generous donor, but is also a dynamic force in helping move the agency forward and serving as an example to others.”

What might best describe Steve’s outlook on philanthropy is the oft-quoted proverb, ‘To those whom much is given, much is expected’.

“I would hope that everyone who has had some good fortune would want to give back,” he said. “And, who else is more deserving than kids?”
OUR DONORS

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Peggy Newman
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North Shore Music Theatre
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Helyn Wynyard Oatis
Parthenon-EY
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The Pet Care Trust
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Alden Wells
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Whole Foods Market
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Linda Willoughby
Windows by Liz
Emily and Shaun Winner
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Workers Credit Union
Susan Wornick
Elaine Wu
Yarmouth Police Department
Rebecca Young Jones
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
ABCDF/Headstart
Academic & Behavioral Clinic
Actor’s Shakespeare Project
Adams-Cheshire Regional School District
Adoption Professional Association of Massachusetts
Adoptions Together
Aguapum Public Schools
Alston Brighton Substance Abuse Coalition
Amherst Pelham Regional Schools
Animal Adventures
Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary
Archdiocese of Boston Priests’ Recovery Program
Arts for Humanity
Barnes Air National Guard Base
Barnstable High School
Barstow’s Longview Farm
Baystate Behavioral Health
Baystate Medical Center
Behavioral Health Network
Family Support and Training
Blessed Harvest Coaching
Bolton Police & Fire Department
Boston Centers for Youth and Families
Boston Medical Center
Boston Police Athletic League (PAL)
Boston Police Department
Boston Public Health Commission
Boston Public Schools
Boston Youth Fund
Boys & Girls Club, Cape Cod, Springfield, Holyoke
The Bridge of Central Massachusetts
Brightside for Families and Children
Brockton Hospital
Brookview House
Brownstone Water Park
Bullen’s Area
Bunker Hill Community College
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Cambridge College, Center for Addiction Counselor Training
Capabilities
Cape & Island Gay & Straight Youth Alliance (CIGSYA)
Cape Cod 5 Foundation
Cape Cod Child Development
Cape Cod Children’s Manor
Cape Cod Collaborative School
Cape Community College
Cape Cod Foundation
Cape Cod Hospital
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Cape Cod National Seashore
Cape Cod Nurturing Fathers
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Cape Cod Technical High School
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Cape Cod Zoo
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Charlestown Recovery House
Charlestown Substance Abuse Coalition
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Chicopee Public Schools
Chicopee Teen Center
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Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts
The Community Music School
Community Servings
Community Survival Center
Cultural Center of Cape Cod
Curry College
Daily Hampshire Gazette
DAR State Forest
David Ruggles Center for Early Florence History and Underground Railroad Studies
Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School
Department of Early Education and Care
Dorchester House
Dorchester Substance Abuse Coalition Advisory Board
Dublin Community Center
Easthampton City Hall
Easthampton Public Schools
Esoterium
Edwards Middle School, Charlestown
Emerson Hospital
Enchanted Circle Theater
Enlace de Familias
Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security
Experimental Aircraft Association
Falmouth Corner Cycle
Family Continuity
Family Nurturing Center
Family Planning, Hyannis
The Family Resource Center
Farmington River Tubing Company
Father’s Uplift
Field Farm
Fitzpatrick Skating Rink
Flavors of Cook Farm
Focus on Kids - HIV/AIDS and STD Awareness
Framingham State University
The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, Inc.
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Greater Boston Council on Alcoholism
Greenfield Public Schools
Grovel Hall Community Center
Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity
Amherst Pelham Regional Schools
Animal Adventures
The Mayor’s Health Line
Housing Assistance
HopeHealth (formerly Hope House
Home Depot
Holyoke Youth Task Force
Holyoke Rows
Holyoke Public Schools
Heritage Plantation
Holyoke Community College
Holyoke Hummus Company
Holyoke Public Schools
Holyoke Row
Holyoke Youth Task Force
Home Depot
Hope Church
HOPE Health
Hope House
HopeHealth (formerly Hospice & Palliative Care of Cape Cod)
Housing Assistance Corporation Cape Cod
Hyannis Recreation and Youth Center
Hyannis Supporting Our Youth Task Force
Improbable Players
Independence House
Institute for Health and Recovery (IHR)
InterCity Weightlifting
Jack’s Pack
Job Corps
Journey to Hope
Justice Resource Institute
Family Network of Cape and Islands
Justice Resource Institute’s Pathways to Permanency Program
Youth Outreach
KAM Appliances
Katelyn’s Closet
Kiwanis Club of Sandwich
Lake Park State DCR Facility
Lake Wyola State Park
Lancaster Police & Fire Departments
Leominster Credit Union
LGBT Coalition of Western Massachusetts
Lowell General Hospital
Lowell Spinners
Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative
Ludlow Public Schools
LUK
Luminosity
Martin Luther King Center
Mass Audubon
Mass Mentoring Partnership
Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women
Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers
Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange
Massachusetts Association of Approved Private Schools (MAAPS)
Massachusetts Department of Children and Families
Massachusetts Department of Mental Health
Massachusetts Department of Youth Services
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Massachusetts State Police
Mayflower Place
The Mayor’s Health Line
Meals on Wheels
OUR DONORS

Sam Bottum and Melanie Domer

Sam Bottum had been hearing great things about RFK Children’s Action Corps for a number of years, having attended college and remaining good friends with fellow board member Lawrence Friedman. When opportunity allowed him to join the Board, he was immediately impressed with the level and care provided.

“RFK Children’s Action Corps is one of those rare organizations that truly delivers and continually seeks to improve upon itself,” said Sam. “The staff on the front line with the kids everyday through the top leadership of the organization have enormous experience and longevity, yet are still amazingly open to new approaches, big and small, that might better serve the children.”

In support of their belief in both the current work and the future of the organization, Sam and his wife Melanie made a generous gift to New Expectations: The Campaign for RFK Children’s Action Corps, with a large portion of it designated to the National Resource Center.*

“As a country, we’re failing too many of our children in too many ways,” said Sam. “It is exciting to see our RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice taking our direct experience working with children and transferring it to states and localities across the Nation. At their own volition, these disparate systems from Seattle to Omaha to Atlanta have engaged with RFK Children’s Action Corps to understand and imbed best practices for systems to take a more coordinated, child-centered approach to juvenile justice and child welfare.

“This means more kids grow up into healthier, happier, productive citizens. And, ultimately, we as a society benefit and pay far less in the long term. It’s a wiser, more humane, and, frankly, more effective approach - and you can’t ask for a better return on your investment.”

Sam’s dedication and enthusiasm have been vital in helping advance our efforts. “We’re extremely grateful to have a board member like Sam who not only believes in what we do here in the Commonwealth, but is also a voice and advocate of our initiatives at the national level,” said Ed Kelley, CEO.

Sam played a critical role in informing our strategic planning process as well as our communications planning. He and Melanie also sponsor Embracing the Legacy every year, inviting family and friends to learn more and become involved with the agency. Additionally, they’ve made sizeable in-kind donations to support agency events.

Whether speaking to the direct care work in the programs or the systems work being done across the country, one thing he notes is that the focus is always on the children and helping them be who they are - and all they can be. “Their stories are heartbreaking, yet I continue to be amazed by how resilient these kids are,” Sam said. “When someone can connect with and support them in a positive, sustained way, they’re able to shine.”

*To learn more about the work of the RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice, see pages 18-19.

DONOR PROFILE

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Abandoned Animals Resource Center for Juvenile Justice, see pages 18-19.

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