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.
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 will follow their example as we fight for quality care, adequate funding and system change.

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 President/CEO

Annual budget: $18.5 million

Employees: 380

Geography: Six communities across Massachusetts and nationwide

Children and families served: 800+ annually
Keeping the family connected is a key factor in the success of a child. **We helped reunite 82 boys and girls with their families** where the environment was safe and healthy.

**We created 16 forever families for 18 infants and children** through our Bright Futures Adoption Center, ensuring loving and stable homes.

**Students across the agency took action with more than 3,244 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 Program, served 142 clients and at least 95% of youth referred to DDAP returned to court for all scheduled court dates.

Education is the pathway to the future. **We helped more than 95 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, 107 children experienced more than 8 theater performances, and 82 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 137 of our students with the opportunity to develop self-esteem, values for daily living, and a sense of teamwork.

The High Risk Youth Network (HRYN) continues to be a resource for those serving youth at high risk in Boston, sharing best practices among our network of nearly 200 providers and our community at large. In addition to monthly breakfast forums and brown bag lunches, we also hosted a Spring Speaker Series that focused on challenges and resources for different youth populations.

In support of our efforts to eliminate the adverse impact of alcohol and drug use on children and families, our Children of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (COASA) Program was awarded $10,000 from The Claddagh Fund. This grant helped us expand our work in Boston schools to engage a greater number of educators and students in addressing the growing public health issue of alcohol and substance use. Founded in 2009 by Ken Casey of the Dropkick Murphys, the Fund grants money to underfunded charities that support vulnerable individuals and families. They focus their support on children, veterans, and alcohol and substance recovery programs.
FRIENDS,

Because of you...

... Sadenna’s infectious smile has returned and she is thriving in school, at home and in her community, instead of in jail.

... Jayden gained confidence and independence through specialized education and has a bright future ahead.

... Miles, Avalyn, and Finn have been adopted into their loving forever family, while staying connected to their birth parents.

... 150 young girls victimized through commercial sexual exploitation have a pathway to safety, security and hope.

Because of you, we helped these children and tens of thousands more like them across the country. Your support, your voices, and your actions enabled us to be there for kids, families and communities who are truly one step away from disaster.

We simply could not do this work without you.

As I reflect on my more than three decades leading this organization dedicated to Robert F. Kennedy’s vision “... that every child in this country live as we would want our own children to live,” I am both hopeful and frustrated – and more determined than ever.

Why is it still so hard to put children first? In one of the richest countries on earth, why do we, as a society, systematically and deliberately neglect our neediest children, their rights and our future?

In one of our stories, you will read about girls victimized by commercial sexual exploitation. According to Richard Estes, of the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work Center for Youth Study, “Commercial sexual exploitation of children is the most hidden form of child abuse in North America today. It is the nation’s least recognized epidemic.”

In a country that claims to value its children, how did the Children’s Health Insurance Program, a critical way for poor children to receive medical care, languish in Congress, threatening thousands of children with the loss of access to medical care?

How do we let this happen?

And yet, children can persevere in the face of adversity. They overcome tremendous obstacles despite so much that works against them. They give me hope to continue to fight with them and for them, here in Massachusetts, and in the 26 states and territories with which we have worked. This means not only sharing their stories, but remaining steadfast in our efforts to change the broken systems nationwide that keep abused children silent and fractured.

You have made a difference for the tens of thousands of children whose names will not appear in these pages. Because you acted, their childhoods were changed for the better, and they have an opportunity for a brighter future.

Our board, staff and I can never thank you enough for being there to answer this call and joining us in helping children, families, and communities in need.

Please know that however you contributed over this past year you have directly improved the life of a child.

Sincerely,

Edward P. Kelley
Chief Executive Officer
AGENCY LEADERSHIP

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STAFF LEADERSHIP
SADENNA’S STORY

DETENTION DIVERSION ADVOCACY PROGRAM (DDAP)
Sadenna fondly reflects on her childhood in Queens, New York. She was a good student and enjoyed spending time with her friends and attending church with her family. In 2014, when she was 16, her family moved to Springfield, Massachusetts. Her father, a pastor, had an exciting opportunity to open a new church. Sadenna would be starting 10th grade at a new school.

“At first, I didn’t want to be down here. I had a lot of my family and friends in New York,” Sadenna explained. “The first couple of days at my new school were very uneasy. I didn’t know people or where my classes were. I was going crazy.”

She was very shy and struggled with fitting in as a Christian Jamaican. She was bullied for her dark skin and was stressed academically. Sadenna would leave school daily feeling bad about herself and cried alone often. “I don’t think anyone understood how depressing it was. I didn’t want to go to school.”

Sadenna was suspended twice in the first two months due to various confrontations with teachers. The third incident escalated to police involvement and an arrest for trespassing and disorderly conduct.

When Sadenna went to court, the judge gave her an opportunity to choose a new path and referred her to Robert F. Kennedy Children’s Action Corps’ Detention Diversion Advocacy Program (DDAP), a voluntary intervention alternative to court-ordered detention. Juliet Ochoa, a DDAP youth advocate, was assigned to her case.

“On my first interaction, I went to Sadenna’s house,” said Juliet. “She was very well taken care of, but she was an introvert. Her self-image was deficient and needed work.”

“I’ll never forget the first time I met Juliet,” Sadenna remembered. “I knew she could help. She was a big supporter and always knew what to say. She believed in me. Nobody knew the truth of what was going on at school.”

Juliet examined Sadenna’s class schedule and realized that the school did not have her Individualized Education Program (IEP). With the support of Sadenna’s parents, Juliet arranged meetings with the school and her IEP was updated. Her classes were rearranged to accommodate her needs.

Since Sadenna was new to the Springfield area, Juliet took her to some of the community parks and the local gym. Sadenna joined other youth in the DDAP walking group that Juliet started.

“Within weeks, I noticed her smile more and an urge to participate in other activities such as bowling, cookouts, movies and swimming,” said Juliet.

After completing 10th grade, Sadenna’s confidence grew and she worked with Juliet to explore other educational options. She transferred to Springfield’s alternative campus and thrived, making new friends and taking on leadership opportunities.

In 2016, Sadenna successfully completed DDAP and her charges were dropped. As a champion for DDAP’s diversionary services, Sadenna was selected along with two other DDAP youth to present to state legislators at the State House, telling her story and advocating for support.

“I had never been to Boston. I was very excited,” Sadenna recalled. “I talked about my experience and how this program can help you. I was able to thank all my supporters.”

“Every time I take Sadenna around other kids she is a positive role model,” said Juliet. “When we go in group settings, she has empathy. She is a mentor to other kids.”

Now 19, Sadenna is looking forward to attending Holyoke Community College and studying nursing with the goal of becoming a pediatrician. “Good can come out of these types of situations,” Sadenna said proudly. “Now I can say I’m a different person in a positive way. I believe in myself.”
Jayden had a challenging childhood. His mother passed away when he was less than a year old. He was born addicted, diagnosed with fetal alcohol syndrome, mood disorder and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

The odds were stacked against him, but he had a supportive father and stepmother. Jayden started out in public school settings, though it was difficult. He began changing schools every few years and eventually ended up at a therapeutic school.

He then faced another trauma in his young life, also losing his stepmother. “My sister and I started to grow apart. My dad was working a lot,” Jayden remembered. “I started to feel a little depressed.”

RFK Lancaster School’s integrated program combines education, therapy, recreation and social services. Through the curriculum and support services, Jayden slowly began developing healthy relationships with his peers and staff.

“I made a lot of friends. The staff really helped me a lot,” said Jayden. “I’ve shown that I can do a lot of things on my own. I had been in many programs, but here it was different.”

“With everything he has been through, his ability to persevere is most impressive,” said Valerie. “He is thoughtful, personable, engaging, respectful and capable. Jayden is a sweet kid with a gentle soul.”

Jayden worked hard on building independence in order to return home. After 15 months in the residential program he was discharged, but stayed on at the school as a day student.

“The transition from residential to day program was a big change. It was exhausting, but I worked so hard to get here,” said Jayden. “Some things were a little rough, but it’s only bumps in my road. It’s nice to be at home and have my family on my side more.”

His dad, Wayne, has remained very supportive and the two have a good relationship. Wayne is a carpenter and Jayden enjoys working with him. When a job opportunity became available at Lowe’s, it was a natural fit.

Jayden received his certificate of completion in June 2017. “That day was big. I had a lot of my family there. They were really proud of me.”

He delivered a graduation speech on that special day. A brief excerpt:

“I really want to inspire the students that are struggling and explain how I’m graduating and how I earned that. Hopefully they will take my story into consideration... I want to thank every staff member at the RFK Lancaster School, because you have taught me life skills that will help me in the future... It has really changed my life and I will remember this school and program as I move on.”

Jayden’s educational journey proved more demanding. He didn’t pass the MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) in the spring and needed to retake it. The staff set up a work study program with him over the past summer. In September 2017, he passed the MCAS and his certificate of completion turned into a high school diploma.

Now 19, Jayden has a bright future ahead. He wants to continue working and save money to go to college. With his strong artistic skills, he plans to study animation, gaming or computer design. His motto on life, “Every door is closed until you open it.”
AN OPEN ADOPTION STORY

BRIGHT FUTURES ADOPTION CENTER
For Matt and Dave, their desire had long been to share their lives with children. In 2010, when they first came to RFK Children’s Action Corps’ Bright Futures Adoption Center, they were some of the youngest people to embark on the adoption journey with the program.

After college and starting successful careers, Matt as a pediatric dentist and Dave as a hospital operations director, they soon prioritized creating a family. But they weren’t sure how.

At that time, they didn’t know any same-sex couples who had children. They did a lot of research and considered a surrogate, but kept coming back to adoption. Karen Cheyney, Bright Futures’ program director, was supportive and encouraging in their open adoption decision and put them in touch with other gay couples who had adopted.

“We were so focused on the process,” explained Dave. “When we met Karen, she helped us focus on the details of parenting. She pressed us on parenting styles and made us think about what our community looks like.”

These conversations helped Matt and Dave determine what type of children they would be best suited to parent. They have now adopted three infants through Bright Futures – Miles, Avalyn and Finn. Each of their three adoption stories is unique, but there are some common threads, including that all the children’s birth families have stayed engaged with the family.

“Each open adoption is different and unique. We work on a case-by-case basis to do what is in the best interest of all parties,” said Karen. “Matt and Dave have compassion and flexibility, which is very important. They have very open communication.”

“Open adoption makes a whole lot of sense because, as our children get older, there’s ongoing information for them,” said Dave. “Also, there are no secrets, which is much better for everybody.”

Matt and Dave completed their home study with approval to start networking with expecting couples in June 2011. They met Miles’ birth parents that November, when his mother was seven months pregnant. “It was the first case we were presented and it was a perfect match,” said Matt.

The process was smooth and they welcomed Miles into their home when he was born in February 2012.

Since they had learned about openness from the start, Matt and Dave were prepared for building a relationship with Miles’ birth family. Initially, they had obvious fears, but over time they let down their walls and grew comfortable with Miles’ extended family. Miles is half Mexican and they have celebrated bringing Mexican culture into his life.

Now five-years-old, Miles knows his whole story. “Miles loves it. He’s very family oriented,” said Matt. “He has a really good relationship with his birth parents and his grandparents. He gets excited to tell people he’s adopted. He’s very proud.”

As first-time parents, they decided to wait before expanding their family. When Miles was three, Matt and Dave created another life milestone and married, with Miles celebrating at their sides.

When they were ready to pursue a second adoption, the scenarios were more complicated. They had two cases where they matched with birth parents who chose to parent their children. This was devastating for Matt and Dave as they had been hopeful to become parents again and provide Miles with a sibling.

Eventually, they matched with Avalyn’s birth parents, Lindsey and Tyson. They brought Avalyn home in February 2016, on Miles’ fourth birthday. He was a little more independent and thrilled with the exciting gift of a sister.

In addition to visiting several times a year, Lindsey and Tyson text and stay connected with the family on social media. They appreciate that the couple is incorporating Avalyn’s Caucasian, African American and Hispanic heritage and Miles’ Mexican culture into their own family.

Last spring, Matt and Dave decided they were ready for a third child. They soon learned that a couple was looking for a family like theirs and they eagerly engaged in getting to know the birth family. They were overjoyed when the birth parents asked them to name the baby. In their first two adoptions, the children were named by their birth parents. When their son was born in July 2017, Matt and Dave named him Finn.

Shortly after Finn joined the family, it was time for Bright Futures’ annual summer picnic for adoptive and birth families. It’s an afternoon of celebration, connections and relationship building.

“This year at the picnic, Ava’s family was in full force. For Finn, it was the same way,” said Dave. “Miles birth grandparents were there. And Finn’s family brought a gift set for Ava and Miles.”

Matt and Dave believe families come in various forms and are something to cherish.

The list of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins among all the families is extensive. “We haven’t counted the total, but I can tell you what it is anyway,” said Matt. “It’s exactly the number it’s supposed to be.”

Of their future, Dave said, “If we are in the position, and we have the means, we may have more children. For now, we’re outnumbered, especially with two dogs.”
Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is a vast and challenging social dilemma, both domestically and internationally. Statistics are often unavailable or inconsistent due to the hidden nature of the crime, high levels of under-reporting and the invisibility of victims. Estimates of the prevalence of CSEC in the U.S. are particularly scarce, though the Department of Justice suggests as many as 300,000 children are at risk for sexual exploitation each year. A 2011 report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics on human trafficking identified that almost 95 percent of sex trafficked victims were female.

These disturbing statistics drove RFK Children’s Action Corps into action, developing the Girls Overcoming (GO) Project. With generous support from the hope & grace fund, a project of New Venture Fund in partnership with philosophy inc., the agency hired Mangny (Maggie) Echimane as CSEC program coordinator in August 2016.

The GO Project set forth specific goals to help girls and young women in Western Massachusetts:

- address behavioral and mental health issues that can lead to commercial sexual exploitation
- develop the self-esteem and resiliency to successfully deal with adverse experiences
- be empowered to find their voices and successfully advocate for themselves

At the outset of the GO Project, a partnership was established with the Hampden County Coalition to Identify and Prevent Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children to best leverage available resources and more effectively deliver services. The Coalition includes different social service agencies, police officers and local businesses, like hotels.

“We knew CSEC was a problem, but we didn’t know how big it was,” said Maggie. “By joining the Coalition team, I was able to understand how different players work together. One person cannot tackle the whole problem. Different pieces all come together beautifully.”

In just nine short months, the GO Project served 148 girls in Hampden County. The youngest was just 7, and the oldest was 23 years old. The majority suffer from trauma or face mental health challenges. More than 60 percent admitted they struggle with substance abuse.

The variety of stories highlights the complex pervasiveness of the CSEC problem.

A 9-year-old girl plays a word game on her mom’s phone before going to bed every night. One day, someone invites her into a chatroom. They ask her to send a photo. She may say no, but that’s part of the grooming. She doesn’t recognize it’s a stranger with ulterior motives.

A 14-year-old is on the run and not accountable for her whereabouts. She gets picked up by an older girl who offers her a place to stay for free. She’s invited to a party and given a spiked drink. She is gang raped. She’s too ashamed to go back to her parents. Her rape was videotaped and she feels trapped by threats to leak it on social media.

A teenage daughter is home every night for dinner. She’s an excellent student. She often goes to a friend’s house to do homework. Her parents don’t know that she is going to her pimp. A second phone can be easy to hide. She returns home every night as if life was normal.

Each one of these situations requires a different approach to address. The goal regarding positive changes in attitude and behavior is a promising start to a process that for many will take ongoing services and support.

“Many parents don’t know that sex trafficking can happen in their home,” said Maggie. “The most amazing part is that sometimes a simple talk can help.”

Maggie has served as a resource to girls, families and other RFK Children’s Actions Corps staff. She credits relationship-building as the key to success. “I go out in the community. I will go to homes,” she explained. “Whatever is best for the kid.”

As part of the GO Project’s focus on prevention, Maggie visited RFK Children’s Action Corps’ South Hadley Girls Treatment Program twice a week.

“Many girls were involved with CSEC issues, but didn’t realize that’s what it was,” said Melissa King, South Hadley program director. “Maggie’s visits made a huge impact on our program. She met with and had a personal relationship with most of our girls.”

The girls looked forward to individual and group conversations on healthy relationships. “I really liked when Maggie came. She let me vent and never judged me. “She was nice and she helped me figure out some hard things.” said Jasmine, a South Hadley resident.

It is a long process to overcome commercial sexual exploitation. Many times, these girls do not see themselves as victims. Getting them to address mental health and other risk factors is an ongoing process. Through the GO Project, 89 girls self-reported having increased knowledge or awareness about how to access mental health resources.

“We identified a lot kids. They’re in our network, we can provide them services, but the battle is not over,” said Maggie. “We can never stop the work. These kids need us. If we can prevent one kid from being trafficked, that makes it worthwhile.”
THEIR STORIES
GIRLS OVERCOMING PROJECT
Since its launch in 2013, the Robert F. Kennedy National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice (RFK National Resource Center) has served a growing number of communities throughout the country. We support children and families involved in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems by working with state and local jurisdictions, conducting trainings and learning events, and developing new tools and resources.

### NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND ADVOCACY

The RFK National Resource Center continues to develop new partnerships with other national youth-serving organizations. We enhanced our relationships with several long-term partners and remain dedicated to providing leadership at national and federal levels. We broadened our work to serve more children and families throughout the country.

### IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR DUAL STATUS YOUTH WITH CWLA

In March 2017, we launched a new partnership with the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA). We value our long-standing relationship with CWLA and are excited to form this new partnership focused on improving outcomes for dual status youth – youth who are known to both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

### JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM AND STATE COURT INITIATIVE

In June 2017, the State Justice Institute (SJI) selected the RFK National Resource Center, as well as several of our national partner organizations, to serve on an expert working group supporting the new Juvenile Justice Reform and State Court Initiative. The group will help broaden the reach of juvenile justice reform nationally by developing new resources, conducting trainings, and providing technical assistance to state courts.

### NATIONAL AND FEDERAL POLICY

In May 2017, U.S. Senators Gary Peters (D-Michigan) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) reintroduced the CONNECT (Childhood Outcomes Need New Efficient Community Teams) Act. This important legislation will assist states in addressing the unique challenges of dual status youth. We were proud to assist with the development of the CONNECT Act.

### SITE-BASED WORK

During FY17, we added new trainings, projects, and initiatives to our portfolio of site-based activities. As the demand for our services has increased, so has our team of expert consultants who work alongside our staff and help us reach more communities, children and families.

### DUAL STATUS YOUTH REFORM

At our Inaugural Symposia in April 2016, we invited jurisdictions to apply to become one of several competitively selected sites to take part in our dual status youth (DSY) training initiative. In August 2016, we announced our selection of six jurisdictions that subsequently participated in the DSY training initiative: Augusta County, VA; Hall County, GA; Jefferson County, WI; Palm Beach County, Fl; Pennington County, SD; and, Polk County, IA. We also selected three jurisdictions that had strong foundations in multisystem collaboration to receive two days of on-site training: Stearns County, MN; Summit County, OH; and, Tulsa County, OK.

We’ve been delighted to partner with the Judicial Council of California to support the implementation of newly enacted state legislation, Assembly Bill 1911. In this effort, we worked with a committee of statewide leaders and stakeholders to develop and report recommendations to enhance data collection and outcome tracking for the state’s DSY population. Also in California, we continued to partner with the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL) to support San Diego County’s efforts to better serve commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC). We were invited back to Santa Clara County to provide additional technical assistance to increase and sustain its successful DSY reform efforts. Moving eastward, we launched a statewide DSY initiative in North Dakota.

### PROBATION SYSTEM REFORM

Over the years, many juvenile probation departments have sought our support through participation in our unique and comprehensive probation system review (PSR) process. A PSR is an exciting opportunity for a probation department to assess its performance, develop new goals and objectives, and devise practical strategies for improved performance and outcomes.

In FY17 we concluded our work with several probation departments, including those supported through a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) within the Territory of Guam, Massachusetts and
New York. Throughout the year, we launched our PSR and other long-term projects in several new communities, including: Clark County, NV; El Paso, TX; Milwaukee County, WI; and, the state of Idaho. Through a grant awarded by the SJl, we also launched our PSR in three additional sites: Davidson County, TN; Fairfax County, VA; and, Lancaster County, NE.

RELEASE OF THE PROBATION SYSTEM REVIEW GUIDEBOOK, 2ND EDITION

In FY17, we released a new edition of one of our cornerstone publications: Probation System Review Guidebook, 2nd Edition, co-authored by our Executive Director, John Tuell, and Probation System Reform Program Director, Kari Harp. Whether utilized in conjunction with our on the ground technical assistance or used independently by a jurisdiction, this publication presents a framework for reform that incorporates the most current advances in the field.

ADVANCING REFORM THROUGH OUR PRACTICE NETWORKS AND ADVISORY GROUPS

Our work is enhanced by the expertise and leadership of our DSY and PSR Practice Networks. Members of these networks have championed reform within their local communities and serve as peer mentors to leaders in other jurisdictions. In December 2016, we held the inaugural meeting of the Juvenile Justice and Education Advisory Group to discuss and identify reform efforts to better serve students involved in the juvenile justice system.

* 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.
RFK Children’s Action Corps is part of NYPUM’s national network of direct and indirect youth service agencies dedicated to developing youth through a unique goal-oriented mentoring program. Supported by American Honda Motor Co., Inc., 33 programs in 18 states use NYPUM-trained adults to teach kids how to safely and legally ride trail bikes. There are also components of vocational, academic, and social development that are taught in a nurturing mentoring environment. NYPUM’s early work and success with at-risk youth has allowed the expansion of its programming to reach youth of military service members, young women and girls, and Native American youth.

This year, NYPUM opened community-based programs in Los Angeles and Sacramento Counties through a partnership with California State Parks and public safety agencies.

ROBERT F. KENNEDY JUVENILE JUSTICE COLLABORATIVE

In 2009, to honor Robert F. Kennedy’s legacy of concern for youth involved in the juvenile justice system, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights and Robert F. Kennedy Children’s Action Corps joined forces to create the Robert F. Kennedy Juvenile Justice Collaborative. Over the past seven years, the Collaborative became a leader on federal youth reentry issues and our work has improved and increased support for effective youth reentry programs, with a special focus on increasing access to education for returning youth.

As the Collaborative wrapped up its work at the end of 2016, we recognized the achievement of its goals and many successes in educating national policy makers and allies on youth reentry issues; establishing partnerships with leading youth justice organizations; and bringing justice system-impacted young people into federal policy discussions.

To increase youth access to education and reentry supports, we convened a national listening tour which yielded information about the challenges of providing quality career and technical training on correctional and reentry education for youth to the Departments of Education and Justice. We also educated bipartisan Congressional offices to secure provisions in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to improve access to education and reentry supports for justice system-involved youth.

We recognized the importance of ensuring federal policy makers hear directly from justice system-impacted youth when crafting youth reentry policy. It’s equally important that young people feel supported and empowered to share their stories and experiences with decision makers at events. We created these opportunities though the House Judiciary Committee’s Over-Criminalization Task Force Forum; Capitol Hill and Administration visits for
young juvenile justice advocates as part of the Juveniles for Justice annual advocacy trip; the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s Annual Legislative Conference; and the College Not Prisons advocacy campaign.

Historically, youth reentry was an under-resourced and neglected issue in the federal policy arena. We are proud to say that the Collaborative, along with our organizational and youth partners, increased focus on youth reentry so that now it is an integral part of the youth justice reform movement.

THE NATIONAL CRITTENTON FOUNDATION (TNCF)

The National Crittenton Foundation has been the leading agency for girls and young women in the United States for more than 130 years. To enhance our work in serving this population, RFK Children’s Action Corps joined the Crittenton Family of 26 member agencies representing 31 states, including Washington D.C., in 2012. Together, we are ensuring that girls and young women across the country have the support needed to heal and thrive.

During the past year, we hosted regular meetings with our family of agencies to deliver organizational updates and share best practices. We also helped develop the Beyond ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) webinar to address the negative impact of childhood adversity and the related trauma that results from exposure, as well as the resiliency, courage and healing of which girls and young women are capable.

TNCF’s alliance with the White House Council on Women and Girls allowed Saisha, an alumna of our Detention Diversion Advocacy Program (DDAP), to visit the White House. The topic of the day-long activities was “Young Women Leading the Way; Breaking Barriers for Girls and by Girls.” Saisha engaged in panel discussions, workshops and learned the art of networking with other young women from around the country.

TNCF continues to move forward its mission and improve the lives of girls and young women. Our partnership has allowed us to successfully extend our presence within the communities we serve.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDREN OF ADDICTION (NACOA)

Since 1995, our Children of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (COASA) program has been a local affiliate of the National Association for Children of Addiction (NACoA), formerly the National Association for Children of Alcoholics. A national nonprofit 501(c)(3) membership and affiliate organization working on behalf of children of alcohol and drug dependent parents, NACoA believes that none of these children should grow up in isolation and without support. Their mission is to eliminate the adverse impact of alcohol and drug use on children and families.

Serving close to 1,000 children and adults, one of COASA’s goals is to educate communities about children of alcoholics and other substance users and encourage people to come forward and learn more about the impact of this disease on the family. We collaborate with other local organizations to bring support to children and families, utilizing evidence-based materials developed by NACoA. Each year, we serve as a resource in Boston area schools, providing support groups to children and grandchildren. We also work with clergy, health and community centers, and families in transition from incarceration. Since 2005, we have supported the Mayor of Boston in declaring the week of Valentine’s Day, Children of Alcoholics Week, bringing attention to this often-overlooked population. Last summer marked the third 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.
EMMA AND DANIEL CARPENTER

Emma Carpenter first attended our Embracing the Legacy event as the guest of her friends Mary Boyle and board member John Boyle in 2015. She was inspired by the importance of the work at RFK Children’s Action Corps and decided that she wanted to get involved and volunteer her time to help kids who have experienced trauma, abuse or neglect.

“Why should any child have to go through the awful situations they’re in?” Emma questioned. “I could think about it, or I could do something.”

A technology executive who is also a qualified aerobics instructor, she began facilitating weekly circuit training for the boys and girls at our Lancaster Campus. Believing that exercise helps with certain conditions, including ADD and stress, she could see a noticeable change in their behavior over the course of the sessions, and many earned special incentives, including attending a Celtics game.

“They liked having something to work toward,” said Emma. “It was rewarding to see the camaraderie and confidence that developed, especially among the girls.”

She was impressed by their efforts, as well as that of the staff.

“The way they interacted with the kids and encouraged them to participate was phenomenal,” said Emma.

Wanting to make a larger investment in the work of the agency, Emma joined our board of directors and the Embracing the Legacy event committee in 2017.

“I wanted to advocate for these lovely children who were in the wrong environment or found themselves in unfortunate circumstances.”

Originally from the UK and a supporter of children’s agencies there, Emma is also drawn to the fact that our work expands beyond the direct care services in Massachusetts and impacts systems and communities across the country and beyond through the RFK National Resource Center for Juvenile Justice.

“We are so grateful to have someone like Emma who has given her time to the programs yet also understands the greater scope of our work,” said Ed Kelley, CEO. “She is fully committed to working with these kids, who feel like there are people who really care.”

Annual supporters of Embracing the Legacy, she and her husband Daniel maximize their contributions with matching gifts from her employer, Cisco.

When asked about the importance of making financial donations to organizations like ours, Emma refers to Robert Kennedy’s dream, “…that every child in this country live as we would want our own children to live.”

“I would ask people who they want their kids to be interacting with on a daily basis,” she said. “Someone who has gone through a great program, has learned the value of life and how to get out of the negative cycle – or someone who hasn’t. We as a society are only as strong as our weakest link.”

Emma has also participated in Community Reading Day and is interested in implementing additional initiatives within the programs, including nutrition and mentoring — resources beyond basic care that can have significant impact on a child’s future.

“It’s important to ask how we can make a difference in their lives,” Emma said, “so they can then go out and make a difference themselves.”
Betsy Munzer first became involved with RFK Children’s Action Corps in 1984, when her close friend Fay Rotenberg passed away. Fay’s son Jon asked Betsy to join our board of directors, on which she would serve for 25 years, including four as board chair.

“I feel it’s important for board members to identify how they can best contribute,” she said.

A former state labor official, Betsy quickly decided what her interest and focus would be. Staff was her number one priority, advocating for better benefits and working conditions within the programs.

“My goal was to do anything I could to make the staff lives better. It’s the best way to improve the lives of the children in our care,” Betsy said.

She chaired the human resources committee for many years, and during her tenure, she worked tirelessly to enhance the work environment of our staff. She was a major contributor to the employee handbook and was a force behind the introduction of a retirement plan and long-term disability.

“I really enjoyed working with Betsy,” said Terry Shanley, senior vice president of human resources. “She came to meetings fully prepared, and her energy and knowledge about HR issues have made a lasting impact on the agency.”

In addition to her time, she and her husband John have made significant financial contributions to the agency over the years. They have supported numerous events and initiatives, including the annual fund, Embracing the Legacy, Rodman Ride for Kids, Winter Wish, and our Detention Diversion Advocacy Program (DDAP). Additionally, they have made gifts to two campaigns, most recently to New Expectations: The Campaign for RFK Children’s Action Corps.

When asked what stands out at the agency, Betsy credits the longevity and commitment of leadership, including the board, and staff at every level.

“RFK Children’s Action Corps is extremely well-run,” said Betsy. “They value their staff, an outstanding group of people who care and have committed their lives to helping others.”

Her tenacity and lasting impact on the agency were celebrated with the establishment of the Betsy Munzer Leadership Institute Professional Development Award, which she notes as one of the most touching moments of her life. The award is presented annually to the most outstanding staff member who demonstrates exceptional leadership and professional growth. “Betsy’s wisdom, leadership, and tenacity helped make this agency what we are today,” said Ed Kelley, CEO. “Betsy truly embodies caring in action.” After her resignation from the board in 2010, she has remained an active supporter of RFK Children’s Action Corps, serving on the Advisory Council, facilitating introductions to new donors and friends, and attending staff appreciation nights at which she has presented the award named after her.

Having been retired for a number of years, she also works with other charitable organizations, choosing to be involved with those that reflect a positive, collaborative environment and share her philosophy of being supportive of those who have less.

“I have felt blessed my entire life,” she said. “And, I want to give back from those blessings.”
FINANCIAL INFORMATION
JULY 1, 2016 – JUNE 30, 2017

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS
Cash $236,832
Other current assets 2,746,105
Total current assets 2,982,937

OTHER ASSETS
Property and equipment 5,464,263
Long-term investments 2,261,386
Other assets 661,170
Total other assets 8,386,819

Total assets $11,369,756

LIABILITIES

Current liabilities $2,249,177
Other liabilities (long term debt) 4,485,983
Total liabilities 6,735,160

TOTAL NET ASSETS $4,634,596

REVENUE AND EXPENSES

Revenue $18,281,804
Department of Children and Families (DCF) 7,795,902
Department of Youth Services (DYS) 3,845,730
Cities, towns and Department of Education (DoED) 3,881,062
Contributions, gifts and grants 1,617,879
Other (investments, misc.) 1,141,231

Expenses* $18,949,987
Program expenses 15,220,653
General and administration 2,362,599
Fundraising 1,366,735

FISCAL YEAR 2017 DEFICIT (668,183)

* $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 FY2017.

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

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Calmer Choice
Cambridge College, School of Education and Psychology
Capabilities
Cape & Island Gay & Straight Youth Alliance (CIGSYA)
Cape Cod Foundation
Cape Cod Child Development
Cape Cod Children’s Museum
Cape Cod Collaborative School
Cape Cod Community College
Cape Cod Foundation
Cape Cod Hospital
Cape Cod Maritime Museum
Cape Cod National Seashore
Cape Cod Nurturing Fathers
Cape Cod Sports Team
Cape Cod Technical High School
Cape Cod Volunteers
Capron Park Zoo
Career Point
Carney Hospital
Carnegie Center Community Service Agency
Casa Myrna Vazquez Inc.
Catholic Charities Laboure Center
Charlestown Recovery House
Charlestown Substance Abuse Coalition
Chelsea ASAP
Chicopee Memorial State Park
Chicopee Public Schools
Chicopee Teen Center
Child & Family Services - Lawrence and Fall River
Child Focus
Child Welfare League of America
Children’s Cove
Children’s Hospital, Waltham
Children’s Friend
Children’s League of Massachusetts
Citizens Bank
Citizens for Juvenile Justice
Clark Art Institute
Clinton Exchange Club
Clinton Savings Bank
Codman Square Substance Abuse Coalition
Coldwell-Banker Residential Brokers
College of the Holy Cross
Comcast Cares
Community CARE
Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts
The Community Music School
Community Servings
Community Survival Center
Corpus Christi - Saint Bernard Parish Cultural Center of Cape Cod
Curry College
Daily Hampshire Gazette
DAR State Forest
David Buggles 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
Dorchester Substance Abuse Coalition Advisory Board
Dubin Community Center
Easthampton City Hall
Easthampton Public Schools
Ecotarium
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 Focus
Family Nurturing Center
Family Planning, Hyannis office
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.
Friendly House Shelter
Friends in Adoption
Frugal Fashionista
Gandara Center
Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts
Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts
Girls Inc.
Girls Leadership Corps
Gosnold Cape Cod Addictions Treatment Programs