



"HAND UP...Not a hand out."

# Annual2021 Report

# Executive Directors Statement

*Since 1863, Center for Family Services has a rich history of turning despair into hope and opportunity by providing a hand up. In the face of this global pandemic and throughout this unprecedented economic downturn, accompanied by evolving public health guidance and safety lockdown restrictions, the Center for Family Services has responded with great resilience to effectively keep the people we serve healthy, safe, and supported. This has only been accomplished through the amazing support of our local community and the tremendous dedication of our staff team.*



Jason Nesbitt

Through times of reflection, many of us could have never imagined this pandemic would have lasted so long or have been so devastating to our local community. Thanks to this amazing community, the Center has been able to continue providing assistance. In every time of need, this community answers the call and assures the Center is able to provide a hand up to our friends and neighbors.

Finding positives from 2020 have been hard to come by but I have come to realize that this year was full of opportunities. During these times, we have been forced to be flexible and think outside of the box. We found ways to effectively do our work differently and it has made all of us reflect on what is truly important. This past year, the Center administered more funding to our local community than we ever have and this would not have been possible without the support of the businesses, organizations, and people that reside in the surrounding area. The Center intends to continue providing a hand up to all those in need throughout Crawford County.

This has been an unforgettable year, full of new and exacerbated challenges in our nation, community, and in our work serving the people of our local community. I do not

think any of us could have imagined these barriers would have lasted so long, been so devastating to our community or impacted each of us in the way that it has. Throughout this time, the Center has been able to help provide a plethora of assistance to those in need and it was because of this amazing community.

Here at the Center, we constantly grow in both our desire, and ability to uplift the most at risk members of the place we call home. Our vision continues to be growing in our capacity to provide a hand up to those who have fallen on hard times. We strive to create a community that is safe, secure and stable, a community healthy enough to sustain opportunities and strong enough to generate positive permanent change. Our goals have been and will remain, meeting our friend's most basic needs while helping empower them to get through a difficult time with their pride intact and assure they are able to be self-sufficient moving forward. Looking to the future, the Center for Family Services will continue to be a helping hand as we work together to create a healthier future.

# AGENCY History

## Our History



The Center for Family Services, Inc. is a private, non-profit, non-sectarian agency providing multiple services to our local community. The Center for Family Services was founded in 1995 as a result of a merger between Associated Family Services, Inc. and the Center for Families in Change. Their combined history dates back to 1863 with the formation of an organization to aid families of Civil War soldiers. Since that time, this agency has been turning despair into hope and opportunity. The agency continues to strive for collaborative efforts throughout the community in

an effort to determine patterns or recurrent needs. The Center strives to make permanent, positive changes in individuals, families, and our local communities. This agency believes in helping its neighbors and will continue building on its legacy of caring as we move forward being a leader in our community. The individuals within this agency are expected to hold true to the core-values, work persistently towards the agency's mission and have a shared vision for the future of our community.

An organization was created by a group of women to aid families of Civil War soldiers.

Logan, a community member, bought a house where men could chop down wood and families could get basic necessities.

Named Associated Charities and moved into their first building on the second floor of the Market House.

Associated Family Services Inc. bought our current location, 213 W. Center Street.

The Associated Family Services and Center for Families in Change form into Center for Family Services.

1863

1886

1894-  
1917

1991

1995



# MISSION Statement

*“Building on our legacy of caring, the Center for Family Services exists to assist, support, and strengthen individuals and families throughout our communities.”*

## VISION FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Center for Family Services envisions a community that is safe, secure, and stable. A community healthy enough to sustain opportunities and strong enough to generate positive, permanent change.

### TRUST

An organization was created by a group of women to aid families of Civil War soldiers.



### INTEGRITY

Center for Family Services is guided by a strong code of ethics. This agency strives to lead by example. Center for Family Services will conduct business at the highest standards at all times.

### RESPECT

Center for Family Services honors diversity and recognizes the worth and dignity of every individual. We are non-judgmental and treat each individual the way we expect to be treated.

### COLLABORATION

Center for Family Services is community minded and all inclusive. We believe that teamwork is the best way to accomplish shared goals and working together is the best way to achieve our desired outcome.

*“Nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.”*

*- Theodore Roosevelt*



# HOUSING Department



A home is a base from which families grow and thrive; a person's safe haven, a place to retreat from the outside world. It is the key to health, educational achievement, and business opportunities. Housing counseling helps families not only stabilize their housing situations, but also advance the quality of their lives. We offer budgeting, credit counseling, pre/post-purchase counseling for home buyers, rental assistance and much more. We are the only HUD-certified agency in Crawford County and can assist you with all of your housing needs including; education and training. The housing department provides foreclosure assistance and has over a "96% success rate of saving families their homes. We provide credit counseling with over a 94% success rate of individuals improving their credit score so they qualify for a mortgage."

## **The Cares (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Rent Relief Program:**

Center for Family Services was chosen to manage and distribute Crawford County's funds received from the CARES Act. The aim of this national program was to help renters who were facing eviction or homelessness due to the result of income loss because of the Covid-19 pandemic and/or subsequent shutdowns. From July 16th to November 30th of 2020, our agency and (PHFA) impacted 267 households helping to aid over 600 people. Over \$460,000 was distributed to households in need. 152 landlords were paid any back payments, aiding the renter, along with the rentee. We have

dedicated much of our efforts to supporting our Crawford community through housing assistance.

Our housing team offers two different counseling services, the Foreclosure intervention counseling and Pre-purchase/credit counseling. The Foreclosure Intervention counseling, aimed at keeping families in their homes, seeks approval for HEMAP assistance and/or negotiating for forbearances and loan modifications on a client's behalf. The housing department saw 28 cases and negotiated for 26 of those cases with a success rate of 96%. The pre-purchase and credit counseling saw a 94% success rate of participants improving their credit scores and qualifying for affordable mortgages to become first-time homeowners in Crawford County. The Center is continuing their efforts to challenge housing insecurity within our community.

## **Numbers from the first half of this fiscal year 2020-2021 (NOT including the CARE's numbers)**

### **Rental assistance overview:**

- The use of funds prevented the eviction of 208 adults and children
- Helped 48 homeless persons attain safe affordable housing
- 62 people had their situations resolved and were able to maintain housing, keep utilities on, or resolve transportation and employment issues through our use of advocacy and case management



Susan Cusumano

Housing Dept. Supervisor/ HUD Certified Counselor **DIANN BOLHARSKY** was one of six counselors in Pa. to be presented a "Best Housing Counseling Specialist" award by PHFA during a virtual ceremony on December 4th, 2020. The awards are given as recognition to individuals exhibiting exemplary service to Pennsylvania residents. These counselors help PHFA achieve its housing mission by assisting Pennsylvanians with questions about rental housing, home buying, homeownership, home foreclosure, personal finance, and budgeting so they can make better-informed housing decisions. This counseling has changed lives within our community. This is Diann's second such award, having received her first in 2014.

Diann started working at the center in 2005 and loves her job. She says "Housing Counseling

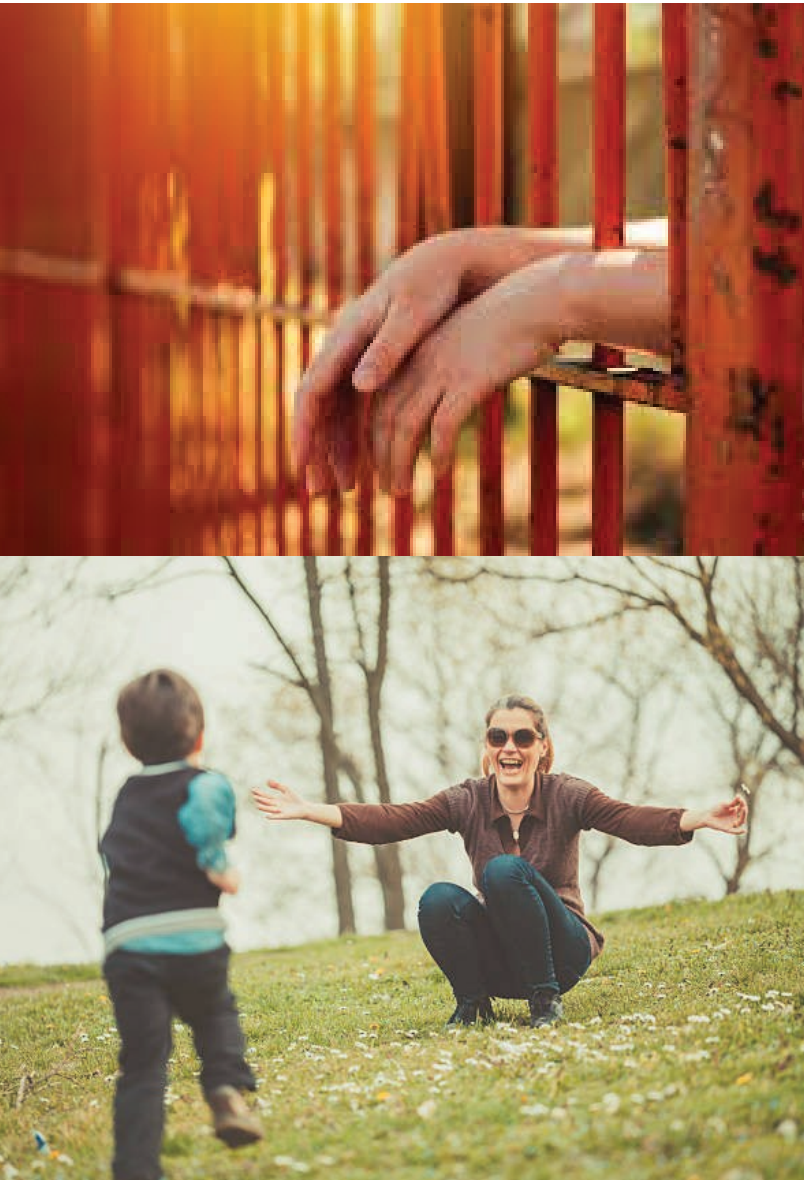
benefits not only those receiving the service but our entire community. Educated homeowners are more involved in the community and add to the local tax base. Foreclosed homes become a blighted property and bring down neighboring home values. The best part of this job is seeing the positive change that can happen in a person's life and knowing that you had a part in helping that person along the way, and sometimes the people you help end up becoming friends."

**SUSAN CUSUMANO** was hired as a Housing Dept. Assistant in Dec 2019. She has been a positive asset to the Dept. and is on her way to becoming a HUD Certified Counselor.





# ASSISTED RE-ENTRY FOR MAXIMUM SUCCESS (ARMS)



*In 2021, Morgan Tingwall was hired as a peer support and advocacy specialist for the ARMS program after graduating from this very program.*

The Assisted Re-entry Program for Crawford County targets individuals often overlooked and under-served: those leaving prison with few supports which increases the potential to commit another crime. The Center for Family Services counselors provide intensive needs-based counseling throughout the program. Therefore, addressing housing needs and providing concurrent wrap-around services, this program creates a seamless, holistic approach to a historically under-served population. It enables clients to achieve and maintain individual self-sufficiency long after the client completes the program. By removing the housing barrier, the Center for Family Services and its community partners can use case management and intensive counseling to more effectively identify and address barriers that often prevent success for an individual after incarceration. These barriers may include job readiness, mental health, behavioral health, transportation, identification, and/or driver's license, among others. This program has aided in the return of children to the care of their parents, improved individual credit scores, created budgeting skills through education, assisted in obtaining gainful employment, helped develop lasting positive relationships with previously "burnt bridges" and helped individuals become healthier both physically and mentally. The re-entry program has partnered with the YMCA to provide free memberships. This program empowers individuals as they move towards being productive members of society.

Morgan Tingwall, a recent graduate of the ARMS program, described the ARMS program as very helpful and attributed her work in the program as the reason she was able to get back on her feet. The employees from CFS (Center for Family Services) that aided in her rebound were very willing to help and cared about getting her back on track. Thanks to the support Morgan gained from this program, she was able to spend less time worrying about finances and more time focusing on herself and her family.

***"We may encounter many defeats, but we must not be defeated  
- Maya Angelou***

# FAMILY EDUCATION Department



Being loved, nurtured and supported are crucial for a strong foundation in a child's life. A strong family can be the source of emotional support, love, security, and protection. The Center strives to assist parents in developing realistic and appropriate goals for themselves and their children. The Family Education Department highlights that a healthy community starts with a healthy home. Center for Family Services works with Human Services to provide parenting, homemaking, counseling, anger management, and Peer support and advocacy. Our goal is to keep families together and assure children are safe and cared for. We have collaborated with Crawford County Drug and Alcohol to provide parenting education in the Crawford County Correctional Facility as well as offer grandparenting/kinship peer support groups for individuals raising children with parents that have substance use disorders. We have expanded our services to provide parenting education and anger management to anyone with a mental health diagnosis and recently expanded our services to cover the needs in Venango County as well. We offer private programs that are affordable and support families from all walks of life. We approach this work holistically; focusing on the individuals as a whole, providing support to all areas that may be in need.

Our expansion into Venango County allows for the combination of our parenting program and supervised visitation program to form the Enhanced Supervised Visitation Program (ESV). The parenting program assesses each case and builds on the family's strengths as well as the areas that might need additional support or education in areas that include discipline, time-outs, structure and routine, and dealing with unwanted behaviors. We look forward to building on our relationship with Venango County to provide additional support in the future.

The Family Education Department also offers a variety of different programs including Peer Support Advocacy Program (PSAP), Anger Management, Assisted Reentry for Maximum Success (ARMS), and Grandparenting groups.

The **Peer Support Advocacy Program (PSAP)** program assists individuals within the Children and Youth Services realm that have had or are in danger of having their children removed from their direct care. Our PSAP specialist acts as an advocate for these individuals, building on their strengths and reinforcing communication between all institutions involved with their case. The program is designed to meet individuals where they are, identify goals that they feel they can achieve, help network to other programs and opportunities, and be judgement free while doing so. PSAP aids in identifying barriers that an individual may be facing and helping them to overcome; assisting in building confidence for the individual at hand.

The **Anger Management Program** aims at assisting those with a mental health diagnosis, to regulate the individual's emotions, realizing triggers, enhancing conflict resolution skills, and the concept of the fight, flight, or freeze reaction in relation to trauma-induced anger.

The Family Education department collaborates with our Housing Department with the **Assisted Reentry for Maximum Success (ARMS)** to assist those individuals that have or are being released from the Crawford County Correctional Facility. This program assists with finding and maintaining housing. We help with documents, i.e., birth certificates, social security cards, photo ID, needed to successfully re-enter our community. We also provide help with job search, getting to needed appointments, retaining a phone, and of course counseling and help with hooking up to all resources regarding their recovery and re-entry into the community.

The **Grandparenting Program** meets in Titusville to support individuals raising their grandchildren. Assistance is provided to individuals who need parenting tips, navigation of the County Assistance Program, and referrals to different agencies as needed.





# FAMILY EDUCATION Staff



Laura Parker



Robin See



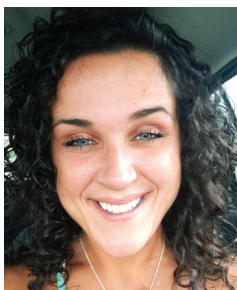
Latasha Manning



Shelby Klingensmith



Robin Barnes



Jene'e Smith



Devinn Henry

**LAURA PARKER** began her journey at CFS in the fall of 2008. She was met with open arms and instantly felt at home. As an intern through the Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Laura was required to have a monthly meeting with an individual with a Master's Degree in Social work, Keith Hough. Laura had the opportunity to work in all areas of the Center with Shawnel Toomey being instrumental in her growth, especially in the development of the Homeless Assistance Program (HAP).

**ROBIN SEE** is our veteran: she has a knowledgeable background in Anthropology which she applies to every aspect of her life. Ms. See leads the HRSA program; working with grandparents and within the Crawford County Correctional Facility. She is also the head of our portion of the PHARE program, along with being instrumental in helping to organize and facilitate the SOS program.

**LATASHA MANNING**, a parenting specialist is currently running the Venango County ESV program. She is a dedicated employee of the Family Education department at CFS and recently involved in the Leadership Meadville Program. She also assists with community projects, for example, she made a video for the Beloved Community which was held in the spring. Latasha represents our agency well with her outstanding ability to see families through unbiased lenses, her dedication to families and loyalty to this agency is inspiring.

**SHELBY KLINGENSMITH** began her work as a work-study student at CFS through Allegheny College. Currently, Shelby is in the MSW program through EUP. Klingensmith dedicates her time to the virtual learning program for parents; this has been especially important to our agency due to limited face-to-face interactions.

**ROBIN BARNES**, a previous intern under her BSW, has found her way back to the center while she earns her MSW. Robin, a previous LPN, decided to join our team due to her dedication and love for our agency and for social work.

**JENE'E SMITH** is a PSAP specialist, a leader that assists individuals involved with CYS. Ms. Smith has been recognized by CYS as a main contributor to ending the cycle of miscommunication between families and the CYS facility. Jene'e's mantra is "do for, do with, let go". She is a vital asset to our team in the Family and Education department and we are so proud of her hard work and dedication.

**DEVINN HENRY** is leading our self-pay program and working as a "floater" for Venango County. DeVinn brings great perspective and organization to our team. DeVinn also has a career in nursing and helps anywhere she may be needed with any and all of our programs.



# Volunteers



**- Shawnell Toomey,**  
*Essential Service Supervisor with  
one of our many volunteers.*

The Center for Family Services could not function without the hardworking volunteers and subsidized staff who dedicate their time to our mission. During this difficult past year, the work study students from the college were sent home and the senior staff in the PathStone program were kept at home from March through August. Women's Services, YMCA and other community members and staff assisted us through volunteering to assure our doors remained open. No matter the restricted hours, COVID 19 safety requirements, and limited number of customers and volunteers permitted in the store, our loyal customers and volunteers made being open possible. Our volunteers are the backbone of our agency and we appreciate the endless support that they commit to serving our community.

Over the last fiscal year, 129 volunteers contributed 4,685.4 hours of service to the Center for Family Services. With the value of a service hour being \$27.20, volunteers of the center contributed a value of over \$600,000. We would like to thank our volunteers for donating their time to the center as you allow our resources to be used in other areas of need. We would also like to thank the following volunteers for being top 3 in hours, Regis Holzwarth (647 Hours), Cody Wasson (770.15), and Terry Toomey (214.95).



# ESSENTIAL SERVICES Department

Families and individuals in our community that have found themselves struggling financially and/or with homelessness that made their way through our doors, benefitting from our services for a hand-up through difficult times. Our Essential Services program aims to alleviate an immediate financial crisis by providing assistance to meet even the most basic needs by offering access to food pantries, personal care packages, and the Best Foot Forward program; aiming to help individuals get back into the workforce. The essential services department also provides utility assistance, fire victim relief, personal care items, and other basic needs items for families and individuals in crisis. The Center operates 7 food pantries throughout Crawford County which distributes over 100,000 pounds of food annually as well as providing emergency food boxes.

## Food Pantry Locations

**MEADVILLE** (main agency Pantry)  
1099 Morgan Village Rd., Meadville, PA 16335  
814-337-8454

**CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS**  
201 Carringer St., Cambridge Springs, PA 16403

**CONNEAUT LAKE**  
Our Lady Queen of the Americas Church  
155 S. Ninth St., Conneaut Lake, PA 16316

**JAMESTOWN**  
St. Margaret's Church  
701 Denver St. Jamestown, PA 16134

**SAEGERTOWN**  
Gospel Tabernacle  
417 Euclid Ave., Saegertown, PA 16433

**CONNEAUTVILLE/SPRINGBORO**  
Valley Church United Methodist  
1118 Main St., Conneautville, PA 16406

**TITUSVILLE**  
Associated Charities  
409 E. Central Ave., Titusville, PA 16354



In August of 2020, the Center was able to replace our outdated, aging truck with a larger food pantry truck due to the Department of Environmental Protection: Food Recovery Infrastructure grant. Along with this, we were able to purchase a new walk-in freezer that aids in protecting and ensuring fresh food that is distributed each month. The installation was completed in September 2020.

Every month, the Center picks up on average 6 to 8 thousand pounds of food. Each week the Center picks up donated food from Walmart, Country Fair, Sheetz, Big Lots, and Giant Eagle to redistribute to families in need. Since August of 2020, the food pantry has rescued, damaged or food that is close to expiration, 53,560 pounds of food.

## THRIFT STORE



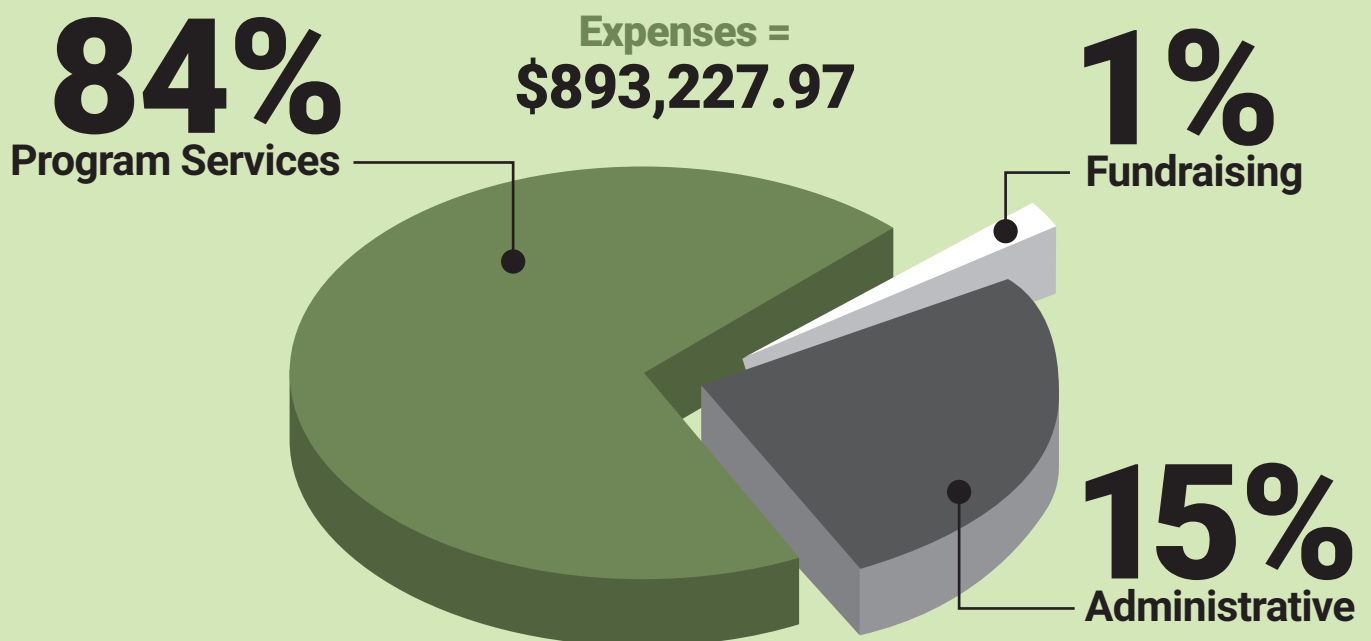
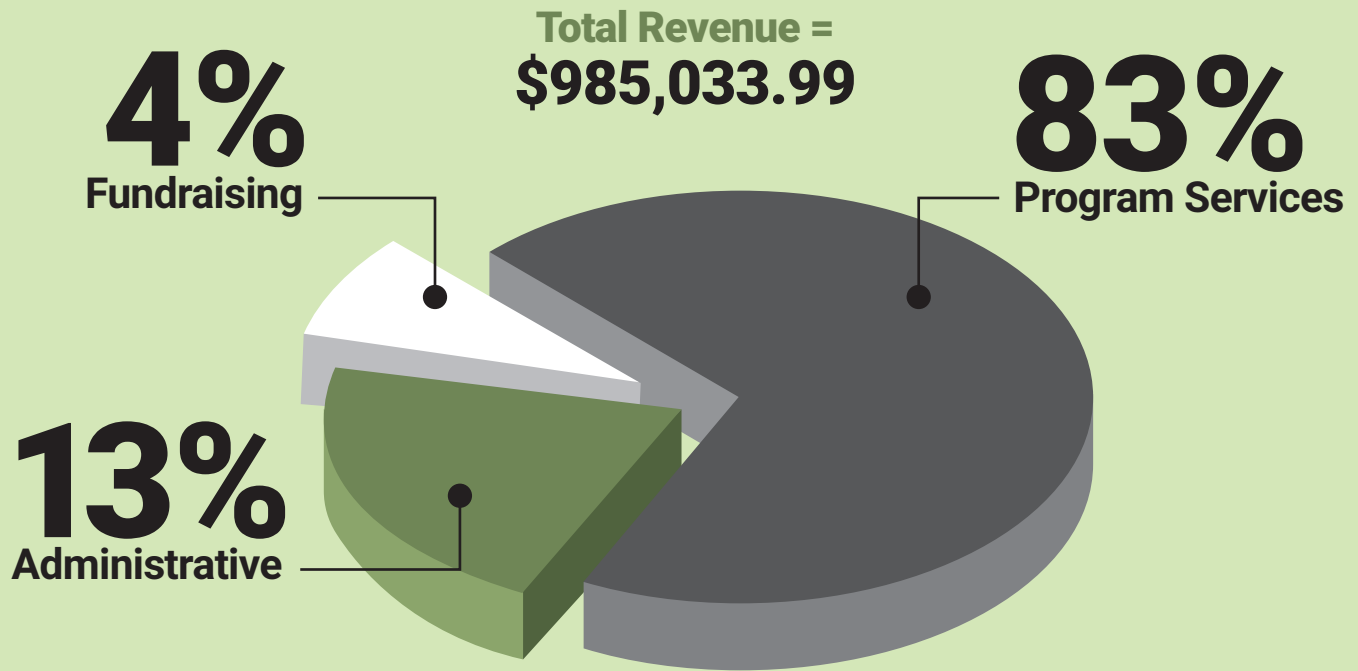
Located adjacent to our main office, the Center's thrift store is a gem tucked away in the heart of Meadville. The store provides a great opportunity to browse unique items at bargain prices. The CFS Thrift Store has one-of-a-kind deals that provide an economical, inexpensive and frugally fashionable option for those that

like to be thrifty. Thanks to the generosity of the community through donations, the store is able to offer a great selection to choose from. Reselling and reusing unwanted clothing and household goods is an environmentally conscious practice that offers savings and also allows individuals to be socially responsible. Items that are unsold or unable to be used by the store are passed along to World Mission (nicknamed Global) or Planet Aid. Also, many metal items and electronics are set aside and taken to be recycled. The store reuses plastic, paper, and fabric shopping bags rather than buying new ones. In support of the Essential Services department, the Thrift Store sets aside household items that may be needed. Vouchers for clothing are provided to those who may need immediate assistance.

## SOL STERN SHOE PROGRAM

In 1908, Samuel and Sol Stern took \$2,500 and created the Sol Stern Shoe program that focuses on providing shoes and socks to children in preschool and K-12. Due to the initial trust, the project has been a yearly initiative that supplies over \$12,000 to children in the Meadville area since the founding. Legacy gifts, continued funding also known as a trust, are essential to communities as they provide long-term support to agencies and help in addressing the root causes of issues in diverse communities. The Sol Stern shoe program has grown exponentially over the years and has acquired donations from others in the community to allow for more children to receive shoes and socks.

# Financials





## Board of Directors

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 Connie Sovisky  
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 Shelby Klingensmith, *Intern*  
 Latasha Manning, *Parenting Educator*  
 VaLinda McCoy, *Finance Manager*  
 Laura Parker, *Family Education Supervisor*  
 Robin See, *Parenting Specialist/Counselor*  
 Kerrie Shreve, *Essential Services Assistant*  
 Susan Teed, *Thrift Store Manager*  
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