



A Family For Every Child

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2009
Annual Report

A FAMILY FOR EVERY CHILD ANNUAL REPORT 2009

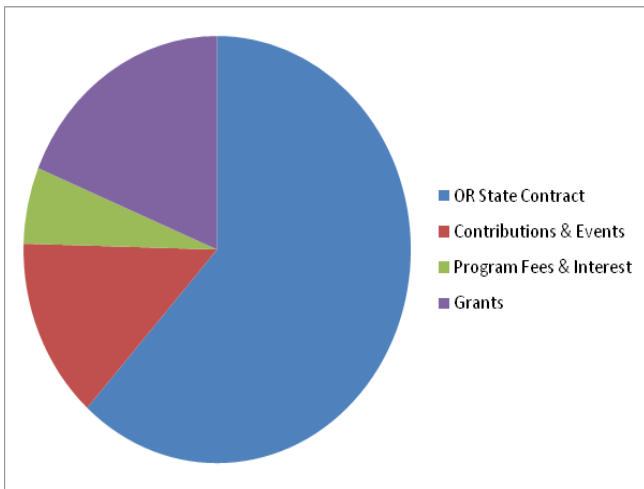


Figure 1—Income

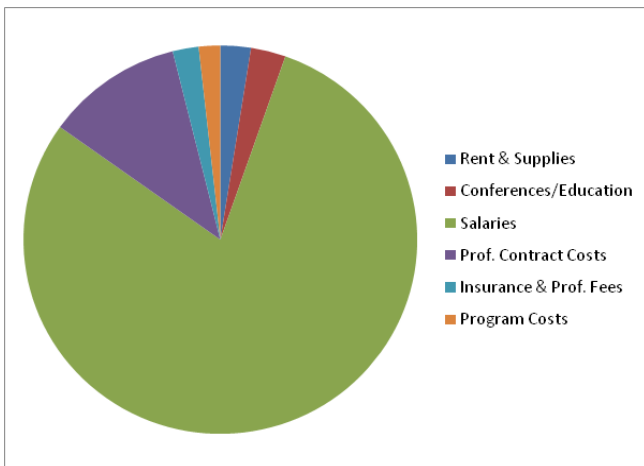


Figure 2—Expenses

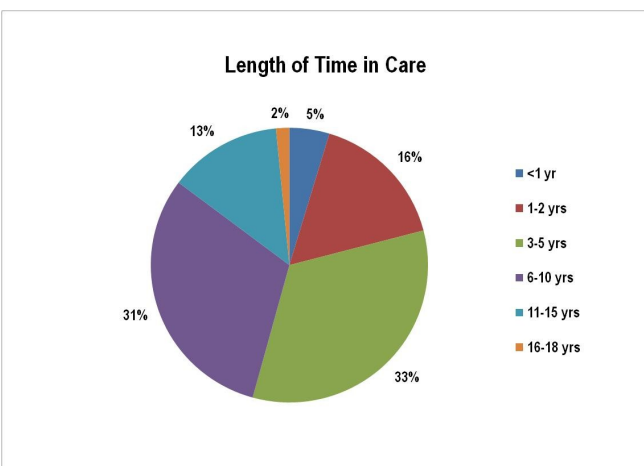


Figure 3— Length of Time in Care

A Family For Every Child was founded in 2006 to find loving, permanent families for every waiting foster child. We began in Lane County with a single program called Heart Gallery, which provided a venue for photographs and descriptions of foster children and youth waiting for their “forever families.” From this initial program, our organization has expanded to continue to meet the needs of foster children. We now have eight programs that are committed to finding permanent families for foster children/youth. We help find families for foster children throughout Oregon and we provide support to families in all parts of the state and country who are interested in adopting children in foster care.

Our organization was developed to meet a tremendous need. In Oregon, over 11,000 children are in foster care and about half of these children are eligible for adoption because their family connections have been terminated by the courts. Many of the children who are eligible for adoption are considered “hard-to-place” because they are more than 10 years old, they are part of a sibling group, or have other challenges. Our experience with the Heart Gallery has shown that if the children are made visible to the community, adoptive families will step forward. These children can find their “forever families.”

Why is this so important? Studies have shown that if children are in long term foster care and “age out” of the system at age eighteen without having a family or committed adult in their lives, they are poorly prepared to meet the demands of adulthood. Children without permanent family connections are less likely to graduate from high school or continue on to college, which significantly affects their long term earning potential. Such children are more likely to experience homelessness, and are at risk for substance abuse and domestic violence. The recently published Child and Family Services Review for the State of Oregon, prepared by the federal government, indicates that Oregon did not meet federal standards relating to permanency for children served by State welfare agencies—including completing adoptions in a timely manner and finding permanent placements for children in foster care for a lengthy duration. Clearly, more help is needed to find permanent homes for children who are languishing in foster care. At AFFEC, we are working to recruit and support families interested in adopting these children in need.

In 2008-2009, Three-hundred children in Oregon were adopted through our community partnerships and recruitment efforts. One-hundred and two “hard to place” children were referred to AFFEC/HG, through a State contract with Oregon. Of those 102 children, 33% were matched with families that could be taken to “Committee” for final approval, within 90 days of implementation. The remaining children took a little longer, but within one year 73% had been matched with families. We expect similar results in Washington State.

Through our recruitment we were able to reduce the average foster care placement of 40 months by half. We hope to serve 300 foster children per/ year, and produce an average of 3 viable prospective families per/child.



A Family for Every Child

Our Programs

HEART GALLERY - Our photo exhibit has grown from one location to 30! Since our inception, over 300 children have moved through the Heart Gallery into their forever families. Sincere gratitude is offered to the photographers and framers who have donated their talent and time to take/frame compelling photos of children in foster care.

- **FAITH BASED HEART GALLERY-** designed to reach out to local churches and faith based organizations which house the Gallery in a different place of worship each month.
- **BUSINESS ADVOCATE PROGRAM** - This program is a very simple way for businesses to feel that they are helping to make a difference in children's lives by allowing space in their place of business to highlight a child
- **MEDIA-HEART GALLERY CHILD OF THE WEEK/MONTH-** Our Heart Gallery Child of the Week/Month program combining radio, TV and print has been incredibly successful with 80% placement of featured children. Why Not You?

HEART GALLERY ADOPTION AGENCY - The Heart Gallery Adoption Agency was founded with the goal of assisting children waiting in foster care to find their "Forever Families." The Heart Gallery Adoption Agency is different than many existing agencies because the focus is entirely on special needs adoptions – children over six years old, sibling sets, ethnic minorities, or children with a physical, mental, or emotional disability.

WEBSITES - While the web can go hand in hand with the Gallery, it can also be a simple stand alone tool. The same photo from the Heart Gallery is put on the web with a short biography. With the case workers approval and a picture, the child can be on line within 24 hours. If a child is able to be placed out of the state, it opens the door for many more home studies, yet we also have luck on the web within state placements. Our 2 websites receive over 300 inquires a week from out of state families who already have completed home studies and 120 submitted home studies a week from around the country.

MENTOR PROGRAM - This program resulted from a huge response from our community a little over a year ago for 3 special teens in the Heart Gallery looking for a mentor. We now have 50 youth/mentor pairs. Our mentors are dedicated to investing their time to instill in their youth independence, confidence and every day life skills. This is done through unconditional support that will in turn create everlasting bonds.

FAMILY BUILDING PROGRAM - It is nationally recognized that 75% of the families that begin the adoption process get discouraged by the lack of support. We also are a resource for services and information that is available for and is needed by adoptive families. There are 2 goals. One is to keep potential adoptive families in the process and the other is to ensure that completed adoptions are not disrupted. Our core belief is that one cannot ask a family to step up if no one is willing to support them.

FAMILY FINDING PROGRAM - This is a search and reconnecting process to help find lost relatives and others who may have been in the lives of foster children when they entered care. This is done through researching DHS case files, combined with an internet search and followed by contact, connection and follow-up. After making connection with people who have cared in the past for the child, a plan is developed for ongoing connection. The benefits for children who are a part of the Family Finding process are that they are in care for a shorter period of time and leave with a solid support system and family base.

LIFE BOOKERS - Each child leaving foster care must have a Life Book which is created for them to preserve their past. Caseworkers are happy to have someone do this large task for them and scrap bookers are pleased to find a way to contribute.

LIFE TIME COMMITTED PARENTS - Finding permanent parents for teens before they exit foster care, no matter what age they are, is the single greatest positive youth development program there is. The focus of this project is to find permanent adoptive parents for teens that need a permanent placement, or to find committed permanent connections who will morally adopt teens who are not emancipated but are in danger of discharge from foster care to homelessness.