



EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE



**Berkshire Children  
& Families**  
BERKSHIRES • PIONEER VALLEY

FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION



# Every Child in a Family, Every Family in a Community.

CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING



YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



IT IS a pleasure to review the activities of the past year, with all the creativity, energy, and efficiency a new President and CEO can provide. Colleen's attention to staff development, strategic planning, and constituency nurturing has strengthened Berkshire Children and Families as an organization and in the communities it serves. The Board of Directors has worked hard to tighten our committee structure, revise the bylaws, and serve as part of the strategic planning task force.



In looking back at my two-year tenure as board chair I am most proud of the resiliency shown by BCF as we weathered the loss of our longtime leader, the anxieties of an interim year, and the challenge of becoming familiar with a new President and CEO. Our commitment to the well-being of children, youth, and families in Berkshire County and the Pioneer Valley never wavered, and we are moving ahead in an ever stronger position.

Thank you to my fellow board members for diligence and wise counsel during a time of transition, to the BCF senior staff for cheerful support, and to the ever more numerous and generous donors to Berkshire Children and Families, whose contributions allow us to pursue our mission. I have enjoyed every minute of working with you all.

Warmly,  
Linda Conway  
Chair, Board of Directors



THIS FIRST year with a new CEO has been a tap-dancing waltz of discovery for Berkshire Children and Families. It was eminently clear that the way we work alongside people towards their best lives is something special. The discovery has been around how we can best accomplish that in the day to day — and decades — from now, when like marbles thrown on a dance floor, the challenges keep coming. We found our footing in a belief that we can help others grow by doing the same ourselves.

With support from our board of directors and donors, and feedback from our communities, we expanded youth mentoring; added family support in school; started popular English classes for Spanish speakers; began broadening service linkage between our programs; supported more adoptions; and stepped up family home-visiting services. We spoke out on issues like forever homes for children, youth violence, and trauma-informed care. With clarity of vision, we completed a 3-year strategic plan, and strengthened our financial sustainability.

We did exactly what we ask of individuals and families we work with — we set goals, took a chance on new things, laughed a lot, and persisted. When we tripped, we found our rhythm in daily walks to the tune of the thousands of children, youth, adults, and families who are our center.

With pride and gratitude for this worthy walk we share,  
Colleen Holmes  
President and CEO

**MISSION** “EVERY CHILD IN A FAMILY, EVERY FAMILY IN A COMMUNITY”  
Berkshire Children and Families promotes the well-being of children and the strength of families to build better communities in the Berkshires and Pioneer Valley. We provide education, parenting skills and support, prevention and intervention, advocacy, and life skills across a spectrum of programs serving children, youth, adults, and families in four key areas: early education and care; foster care and adoption; child and family well-being; youth and community development.



## Live Out Loud!

**THEY ARE** definitely loud. This group of young people comes together weekly for friendship, acceptance, fun, and support. Our Family Resource Center serves as a hub of activities and support for families, children and young people. Live Out Loud (LOL) is a group for young LGBTQ+, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, plus (to make sure they are inclusive of all identities), that helps them connect with other young people and adults in a safe and empowering environment. One participant said she was being bullied at school and having a hard time. When she came to LOL she was “in a dark

place, but Live Out Loud lit me!” Another participant said it is a place that they “can proudly be themselves.”

Live Out Loud also fosters connections with the greater LGBTQ+ community in the Berkshires and Pioneer Valley. The young people attended Pride events in both areas, and were able to celebrate who they are when often times they feel they have to conceal it. As one participant stated, “often times I have to push who I am under the rug, but at the Pride Celebrations, I feel I am home. I am not ashamed, and we are all accepted.”

## “It all started with Kids 4 Harmony!”

**BRUCE HALL** was faced with raising his three children alone after the death of his wife, who was the family musician. The two boys, Greg and Chris, were enrolled in Kids 4 Harmony North Adams with younger sister Katie eager to begin, when she was old enough. Through Kids 4 Harmony the family has found their passion for music with all of them, including Bruce, taking private lessons, in addition to their time with the program. “We play music as a family” stated Bruce, who recently took up the drums.

It’s not just about the music. Bruce said, “Kids 4 Harmony opened me up to other people.”

At a time when Bruce thought he

would be alone to raise his children, he has been opened to a community of support and connection. The entire family has developed trusted relationships with K4H staff. Bruce has been present at all of the K4H activities and always volunteers to help. He can see the difference music has made in his children’s lives and in his own. The kids report listening more at school, helping other kids, and being more comfortable speaking up in class. They also spoke of using music to calm them when they are feeling anxious. They are closer as a family, stronger together. And to think...quoting Bruce...“It all started with Kids 4 Harmony.”



## A Love of Foster Care

**FOR LYNN** Gauthier, being a foster parent is a calling. She and her husband John have fostered many children, but had not taken in an infant until recently. Last fall, Lynn and her family welcomed a seven-month-old baby boy. They were told the goal was to reunify the baby with his father.

Lynn, whose family has grown through adoption, had never experienced caring for such a young child and all of the challenges and joy a baby can bring, “I had no clue how awesome it would be!” she stated. As a foster parent Lynn said it is key for “the foster family

to keep an open heart because the goal is that the child will reunify with his/her family.” Through regular visits, they became champions for the father and could see all he was doing to regain custody of his son. After almost a year, the baby was able to go home with his father. Since then, Lynn continues to stay in touch and has had several visits with the baby and his father. Although the reunification has been bittersweet for Lynn, she said this is “the perfect picture of what foster care looks like. Everybody’s heart was working on behalf of the child.”

# 2,599

groups and activities offered for parents, youth, and children to enhance parenting skills, promote child well-being and strengthen families



# 82

children were placed with foster families in nurturing, safe homes



Our children in early education programs are meeting educational and developmental milestones on target. Special attention and resources are in place to support all the children and their families to meeting these goals

# 97%



# 150

staff members

# 107

community volunteers

Join together to promote the well-being of children and the strength of families to build better communities in the Berkshires and Pioneer Valley

# 57

Kids 4 Harmony students grew musical accomplishments and broke social barriers through performance and learning opportunities including the National Take a Stand Festival in California, the Longy Side-by-Side Orchestra in Boston, and Tanglewood's Day in the Arts (DARTs) Camp





# 47

young people were matched with community mentors, who provide support, guidance, and advocacy for them to work toward a safe and successful life

## CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE AT BERKSHIRE CHILDREN & FAMILIES

*Congratulations and Thank You to our staff, volunteers, and board of directors!*

1Berkshire Trendsetter Award Finalist for **Nonprofit Impact**

**Third in the state** for number of people served by our Family Resource Center

40 under 40 recipient: **Brett Westbrook**, Program Manager for the Family Resource Center

Human Services Forum Award recipient, **Mark Parent**, Board Member

Nonprofit Center of the Berkshires Award in volunteering, **Amy Guachione**, CASA Volunteer, and life-time achievement, **Carole Siegel**, Board Member, and **Linda Conway**, Board Chair, finalist

# 131

years of service in Western Massachusetts. We are the trusted resource in providing temporary and permanent families for children in need



# 1

**clear goal:** guiding children and parents toward brighter futures and lifetime success through partnerships with families, communities, agencies, schools and funders

## THANK YOU

We are deeply grateful for your generous support of Berkshire Children and Families.

**\$50,000+**

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Josephine & Louise Crane  
Foundation  
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City of Pittsfield  
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MA Children's Trust Fund  
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Town of Williamsburg

\* Includes GE Foundation Match

Please visit [berkshirechildren.org](http://berkshirechildren.org) for a full listing of our donors from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018.

## THANK YOU

To the many people who served as volunteers, interns, and advisors, we appreciate you!

Kevin Ashline  
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## FINANCIALS

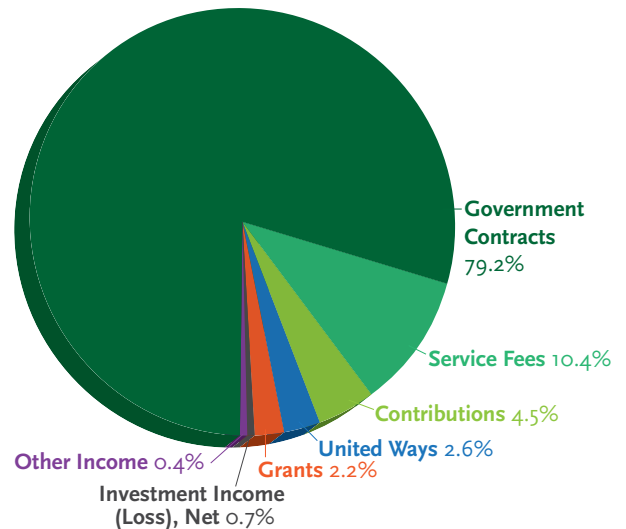
### BERKSHIRE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, INC.

Income and Expenses for the Years Ended June 30, 2018 and 2017

INCOME	FY18	FY17
United Ways	\$240,100	\$235,077
Contributions	411,574	424,490
Grants	203,020	138,000
Government contracts	7,319,307	6,740,618
Service fees	962,284	970,682
Investment income (loss), net	63,993	91,904
Other income	35,681	37,717
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>9,235,959</b>	<b>8,638,488</b>
EXPENSES		
Program expenses	7,892,871	7,509,307
General operating	1,077,746	977,714
Fundraising	112,490	143,349
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>9,083,107</b>	<b>8,630,370</b>
<b>Total Excess (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$152,852</b>	<b>\$8,118</b>

The above is an excerpt from Berkshire Children and Families financial statements for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2018 and 2017. A complete audit report is available upon request.

### 2018 OPERATING SUPPORT



## OUR BOARD AND PROGRAMS

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Chief Executive Officer

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**Berkshire Children  
& Families**  
BERKSHIRES • PIONEER VALLEY

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