



LIFTING PARENT VOICES

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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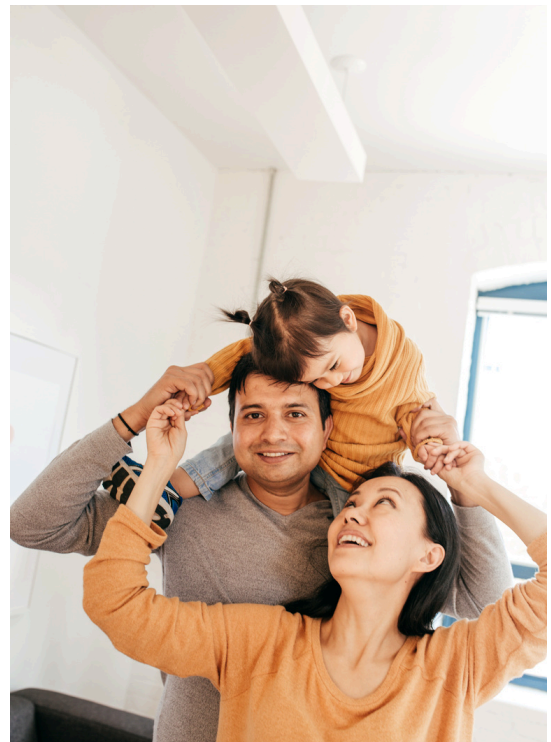
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Letter from the CEO



Dear FamilyWise Community,

Families possess wisdom about their needs and the solutions that will help them achieve their goals. At FamilyWise, our role is to listen.

When we partner directly with families, we listen for family strengths, goals, and opportunities for connecting families with community resources. In our work with communities, we help family service providers and community members think about how they can better see, hear, understand, and learn from the wisdom of families to create nurturing, supportive environments for children.

In 2023 we launched several initiatives aimed at bringing the wisdom of families, and those with relevant lived experience, to the forefront:

- With guidance from a parent advisory group, we trained 21 Parent Leaders to build their skills and confidence, preparing them to share the wisdom of their experience with other families and with organization and agency decision-makers.
- We piloted a Universal Participant Experience Survey to learn more about participant experiences for continuous program improvement at FamilyWise. We also asked parents about their policy priorities and integrated what we learned into our advocacy efforts as an organization.
- Our annual Growing Resilient Communities Gathering reached over 400 people with a keynote presentation and breakout sessions centered on how organizations can authentically engage youth as leaders and changemakers.
- We co-created a parenting workbook for incarcerated parents with input from incarcerated parents, children of incarcerated parents, and corrections staff that support incarcerated parents with their parenting.

Thank you to the families and communities shaping our work by sharing their experiences with us. Together we are creating supportive communities for Minnesota children and families.

With gratitude,



Ann Gaasch
Chief Executive Director



About Us



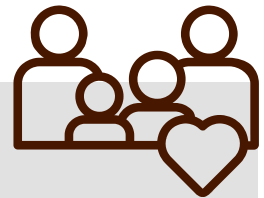
MISSION

Our mission is to strengthen families by promoting the **safety, stability, and well-being** of children.



VISION

Our vision is a world where every child thrives.



APPROACH

With a focus on equity, FamilyWise supports the voice and choice of families as they grow their resilience, strength, and connection to achieve their goals.

Our Reach



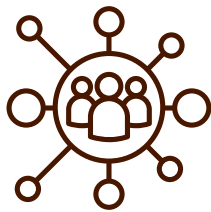
1,192
families supported



3,905
individuals reached



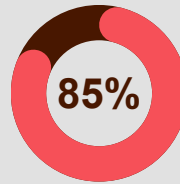
1,310
children served



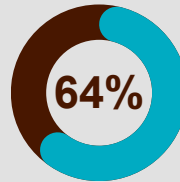
882

connections were made to community resources

Participant Demographics



of participants come from low-income families



of participants were from communities of color



52 County & 3 Tribal Community Partners

- Our direct services reached 1,776 participants, 95% from the 7-county metro
- Our prevention programs* reached 2,078 participants statewide

*Circle of Parents and NEAR Communities

Program Outcomes



Bright Beginnings helps pregnant youth and young parents become the best caregivers they can be through parenting, independent living, health, and social skills workshops. In 2023, Bright Beginnings served **133** unique participants across **58** young parent families, where **79%** of participants had no additional pregnancies and **74%** of children were up to date on immunizations while in the program.

Adult Parent Education helps families who are or could become involved with the child welfare system to strengthen the whole family by building parenting and life skills. Individual and group classes are available. In 2023, **824** participants across **228** families received services, including **529** children. Of these, **72%** of Parent Support Outreach Program participants improved Strengths & Needs assessment scores and **80%** of In-Home participants successfully exited the program.

NEAR Communities and Tribal NEAR Communities provide education, train presenters, and work with communities to share neurobiology, epigenetics, Adverse Childhood Experiences, and resilience (NEAR) research to catalyze individual and community-driven action that fosters understanding, hope, and healing. In 2023, **70** presenters were trained, **40** trainings were offered, and **1,273** individuals were reached.

The **Parent Leadership Program** uplifts parent and family leaders to participate in state and local planning processes and working groups promoting equity and helping to identify and eliminate bias in program services and policy development through co-creation with families and communities. This program supported **two** cohorts of **21** parents.

First Step Early Childhood Education Center is a nationally accredited, affordable childcare center open to the public for all children ages 6 weeks to first day of Kindergarten. Children participate in activities that stimulate their physical, social/emotional, cognitive, and language development with a focus on early childhood readiness for school. In 2023, First Step served **36** children.

Circle of Parents is a national peer-to-peer parenting support group model that creates safe spaces for parents to share parenting experiences and resources and to build confidence and strengthen family relationships. In 2023, Circle of Parents served **805** participants, held **1,744** meetings, and provided **348** referrals to community resources. There were **55** active groups in 2023. **28** volunteer facilitators were trained.

High-Fidelity Wraparound is a nationally recognized model that helps youth with significant behavioral, emotional, and mental health issues to remain in the community by creating an individualized support plan for the family. In 2023, **220** participants utilized High-Fidelity Wraparound across **78** families, with **75%** of youth having no new legal charges, **81%** of youth meeting educational milestones, and **67%** of teams were made up of at least 50% natural supports. **Eleven** people were brought through initial Wraparound learning and we are supporting **four** on their path to Coach certification.

Supervised Parenting operates in cases of family separation or family violence where the well-being of the child is in question. Noncustodial parents and their children visit in a safe environment in the home, out in the community, or at one of our sites. **563** families utilized these services in 2023, and **3,073** visits and **49** safe exchanges were provided.

Our Stories



Parents as Changemakers

Parents play a vital role in our communities. They improve the lives of their families, neighbors, and communities by nurturing their children, lending a helping hand to others, partnering with community resources, and advocating for local, state, and national initiatives that support children and families. But parents aren't always recognized as changemakers. In partnership with parent leaders like Lana Morrow, Tonya Long, and Sheila Harris, FamilyWise is working to lift up the valuable voices of parents in our communities.

Lana Morrow, the Founder of Family Light, has spent her career supporting and empowering parents in Northeastern Minnesota. She's seen how easy it is for parents to focus on their struggles and the places they feel like they're falling short. **But by stepping into leadership roles in their communities, parents can use their experiences as fuel for good to help other people.** "It's a beautiful, special thing to use [lived experiences] to help others."



Lana Morrow
Family Light

In Lana's experience, parents don't realize the power they have to make change in their community using their expertise. "Nobody can know what it's like to go through something if they haven't been through it. You can't learn that in a book," shares Lana. "That is the beauty of how parents with lived experience are uniquely positioned to create change."

Lana encourages parents to begin creating change by building relationships. "[In Greater Minnesota] people may feel like there are not opportunities, but they are there," says Lana. "If you are a parent who is feeling motivated to get involved, the best thing you can do is network. Get to know people, get to know other resources, get to know organizations that are doing work for parents and families, and [leadership] opportunities start to become visible to you."

Tonya Long, a graduate of FamilyWise’s Parent Leadership Program, shares her lived experience with child welfare as part of several government committees and workgroups. “I’m everywhere,” she says with a laugh. “I recently sat on [a workgroup] about transportation and wondered how my experience in child welfare would work with transportation. Surprisingly, I learned a lot and [my experience] did cross over to transportation. How transportation affects parents and bringing equity to that process is crucial.”



Tonya Long
Parent Leadership Program

For parents that may feel intimidated by participating in agency committees and other settings, Tonya encourages parents to feel confident in sharing their experience. “Just because a system operates a certain way doesn’t mean that’s the best way or the perfect way, and you always bring your suggestions,” says Tonya. “You know what’s wrong [with systems]. You know what you’re saying, you’ve lived through it or you have lived experience. **We need to make change, and the only way we can make change is if we change it together.**”



Sheila Harris
FamilyWise

Sheila Harris, a Family Support Partner at FamilyWise, uses her experiences navigating family support systems to provide guidance to other families in similar circumstances. In addition to seeing social workers and therapists as partners, Sheila engages other parents to create a supportive community.

“At the end of the day it takes a village - and very much for us it translates to our roles and responsibilities to create that village,” says

Sheila. From babysitting to showing up to basketball games, hosting birthday parties and

taking turns giving kids rides to football practice, Sheila builds reciprocal helping relationships with other parents that are enriching and sustainable.

While Sheila is a self-described social butterfly, she acknowledges that for many people it can be hard to ask for help. “Usually, the person asking for help – or showing signs that help is needed – is not wanting to ask because nobody wants to be judged. They don’t want their children to be judged, they don’t want their parenting skills to be questioned. You just offer and find different techniques on how you would offer that help.”

Our Supporters



Thank you to all the donors and volunteers who made this year possible.

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Aidan and Rachel Mesic | Ernestine Williams | Levi Strauss & Co | Red Balloon Bookshop |
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Our Leadership



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Michelle Jensen, Program Operations
Manager, Dakota County Children
and Family Services

Paige Olson, Senior Client Success
Manager, Hinge Health

Sally Wahman, Vice President
Operations-Primary Care, Allina
Health

Financial Report



Statement of Financial Position

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Cash & Receivables | \$2,777,868 |
| Other Assets | \$825,223 |
| Total Assets | \$3,603,091 |
| Current Liabilities | \$217,196 |
| Long-Term Liabilities | \$55,816 |
| Net Assets | \$3,330,079 |
| Total Liabilities/Net Assets | \$3,603,091 |



Statement of Activities

Summary of Support and Revenue

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Contributions | \$1,175,401 |
| United Way | \$100,528 |
| Government Contributions | \$899,708 |
| Program Service Fees | \$1,595,198 |
| Special Events | \$10,150 |
| Earned and Other | \$44,763 |
| Total Support/Revenue | \$3,825,748 |

Summary of Expenses

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Supervised Parenting and Safe Exchange | \$438,034 |
| First Step Early Childhood Education Center | \$476,440 |
| High-Fidelity Wraparound | \$577,637 |
| Wraparound Training | \$39,313 |
| Parent Support | \$369,090 |
| Bright Beginnings | \$154,279 |
| ACES Tribal NEAR | \$13,013 |
| ACES Programs | \$651,625 |
| ACH Demonstration | \$156,999 |
| MCCC | \$319,333 |
| Total Program Expenses | \$3,061,468 |
| Management/General | \$338,871 |
| Fundraising | \$274,276 |
| Total Annual Expenses | \$3,674,615 |



Change in Net Assets \$151,133



3036 University Ave SE
Minneapolis, MN 55414
612.617.0191

FamilyWiseServices.org



FamilyWise is the Minnesota Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America and the National Circle of Parents



Support Our Work

