

2022-2023

Impact of Giving

Report

Celebrating **15 YEARS OF IMPACT!**

EMPOWERING foster youth to *thrive*

DISRUPTING *negative cycles*

CHANGING *lives*



Speak Up for Kids
OF PALM BEACH COUNTY



Speak Up for Kids Palm Beach County

Dedicated to improving the lives of kids in foster care

FROM OUR LEADERS

Dear Impact Makers,

While preparing this **2022-2023 Annual Report**, we were excited to enter our **15th anniversary** as the leader of child advocacy in Palm Beach County.

We are thrilled to report that we have achieved several milestones and accomplishments over the past year, including recognition from Good News Magazine as a **Leading Nonprofit**, a **94% Charity Navigator** designation, and the **Hats Off Medium Nonprofit of the Year** award winner in 2021. In 2022, SUFK had nominations in 2 categories.

Our team was stunned by the magnitude of our accomplishments and the collective growth and innovation achieved over the past few years. Although the pandemic forced exceptional hardship, it was also a time of refinement, revolutionizing our overall advocacy approach and leading to increased service capacity, collaborations, engagement, and community partnerships.

Fueled by **YOUR** generosity, we realized a **5% overall growth in revenue** compared to 2021-2022 and a **PHENOMENAL 5,000% revenue increase since 2016**. This infusion of support cleared the path for us to implement innovative ways to support families, engage communities, equip advocates, and empower children to overcome the trauma they have experienced in their young lives.

YOUR DONATIONS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACT the lives of vulnerable children. **YOU** enabled us to provide **20 positions** for the **Office of the Guardian ad Litem** – a **44% year-over-year increase in capacity** for direct support, representing **400+** additional Palm Beach County foster youth.

As you review the following pages, we hope **YOU** are overcome by how the scale and scope of monetary and in-kind donations, volunteer hours, sponsorships, ambassadorships, and overall advocacy have positively influenced thousands of children and, potentially, countless generations.

YOU stayed the course and supported initiatives that improve outcomes, including normalcy, permanence, positive youth development, therapeutic interventions, and disruption of negative and traumatic cycles for those most vulnerable.

Advocacy First and Always,

Scott Penney
Board President

Coleen LaCosta
Executive Director

“What people see you do may not be remembered; what they hear you say may be forgotten, but how they feel your intervention in their times of need will forever be remembered.”

- ISRAELMORE AYIVOR

WHO WE ARE

Speak Up for Kids is a Vehicle of Change. YOUR Donations Provide the Fuel.

On any given day in Palm Beach County, OVER 1,200 CHILDREN are displaced due to abuse, abandonment, and neglect in their home; more than half are under age 5. Spanning from newborn to teenager, these children have unique physical, social/emotional, educational, and normalcy needs and can remain in foster care for a year or even more typical, significantly longer.

SPEAK UP FOR KIDS EXISTS TO CHAMPION CHILD ADVOCACY.

We create engagement pathways for our community to promote positive youth development by equipping students, caregivers, ambassadors, social workers, and volunteer advocates to SPEAK UP for KIDS and ignite transformative IMPACT.

MISSION

WE CHAMPION BEST-INTEREST CHILD ADVOCACY. Through effective advocacy the cycles of abuse, violence, and crime are being broken one child at a time, and children's futures are being rewritten one day at a time.

VISION

THROUGH 100% ADVOCACY, every child is nurtured, supported, and has access to connections and resources necessary for them to know their value and reach their full potential.



THEN & NOW

To fully appreciate the depth and breadth of how interwoven Speak Up is into the fabric of the Palm Beach County foster and dependency care system, we must first pay homage to those who laid the foundation for **Speak Up for Kids'** founding in 2008.



2008 *Speak Up for Kids PBC IS FOUNDED*

LEADERS

FOUNDING COMMITTEE

Micheal Baer, Nancy Gage, Ellen Kranzler, Larry Geller, Lou Scher, Vicki Tucci, Shaw Heydt Thomas, and Gregg Weiss

INAUGURAL BOARD

Ken Thomas, Nancy Gage, Lou Scher, Shaw Heydt Thomas, and Gregg Weiss

PROGRAMS

Exclusive support of the 15th Judicial Circuit Guardian ad Litem Volunteer Advocates

FINANCIALS

POSITIONS

2 Direct Advocacy Positions
1 Speak Up for Kids Position

ANNUAL REVENUE

\$287K

2023 *15 Year Anniversary of* **SPEAK UP FOR KIDS**

LEADERS

CURRENT BOARD

Scott Penney, Concetta Theros, Rebecca Weiss, Dave Elder, Dorothy Bradshaw, Wendy Dohr, Kelly Brennan, Frank Cupido, Sammie Brown, Paul McBride, H. Shaw Thomas, John O'Hara, Pearlie Stribling, Maria Batista and Pam Brooks

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Coleen LaCosta

PROGRAMS

Speak Up for Kids answers the call to help the foster kids in Palm Beach County in many ways.

- STUDENTS Speak Up for Kids
- Gift-A-Birthday™
- Foster Palm Beach
- Flourishing Futures
- Parents Speak Up for Kids
- Embrace Kids
- Courtroom Programs
- The Guardian ad Litem Program

FINANCIALS

POSITIONS

23 Direct Advocacy Positions
6 Speak Up for Kids Position

ANNUAL REVENUE

\$1.6M



GOVERNING BOARD

SCOTT PENNEY
President

REBECCA WEISS
Treasurer

CONCETTA THEROS
Vice President

DAVE ELDER
Secretary

MEMBERS AT LARGE

DOROTHY BRADSHAW
SAMMIE BROWN
LARRY GELLER*
WENDY DOHNER

KELLY BRENNAN
FRANK CUPIDO
PAUL MCBRIDE

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

JOHN O'HARA, Esq
Legal Advisor

MARIA BATISTA
Foster Care Lived Experience Advisor

H. SHAW THOMAS
President Emeritus

ELLEN KRANZLER
GAL Volunteer Liaison

PEARLIE STRIBLING
Caregiver Lived Experience Advisor

PAM BROOKS
GAL Staff Liaison

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

COLEEN LACOSTA
Executive Director

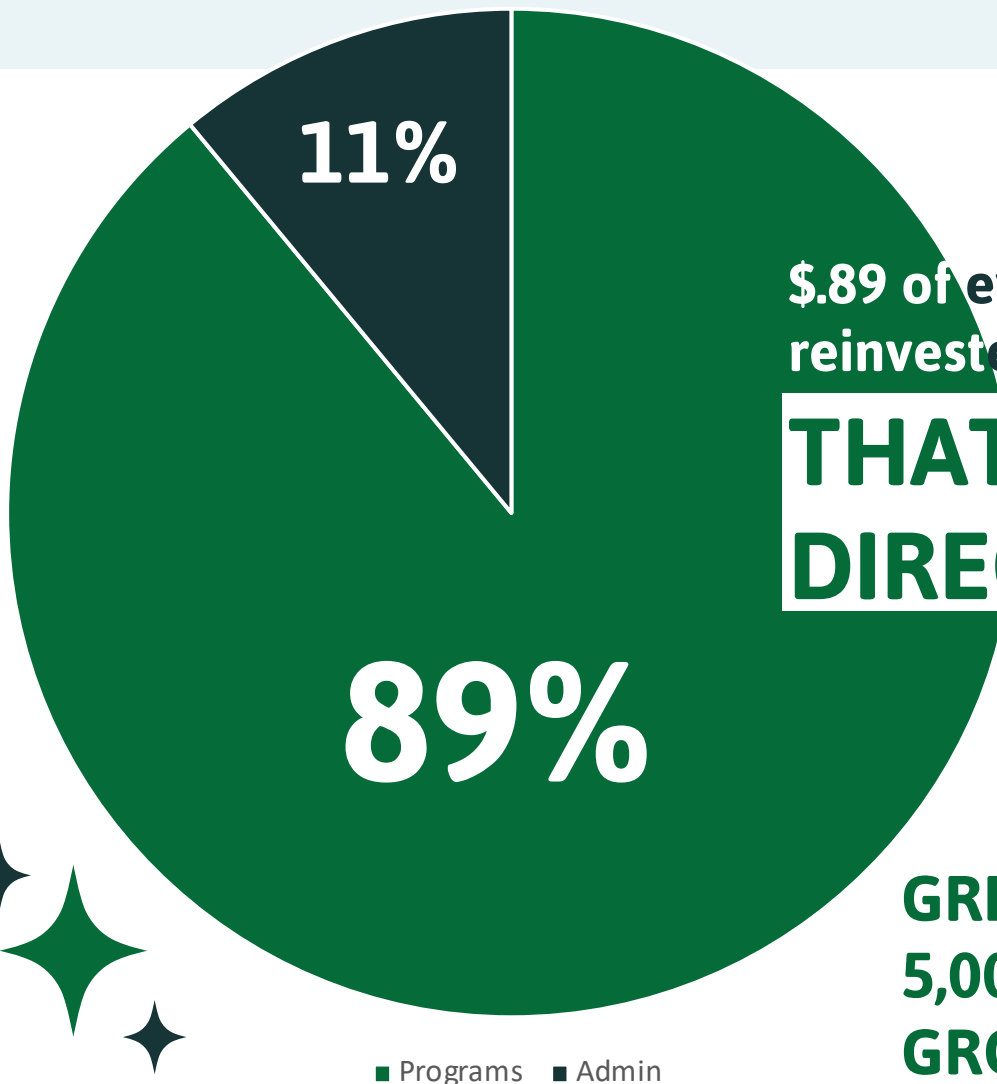
"I was lucky enough to find my tribe, those for whom passion is coupled with child advocacy and leaving an undeniable legacy. The ripple effects of our united efforts extend well beyond this generation!"

- COLEEN LACOSTA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*LAWRENCE "LARRY" GELLER PASSED AWAY ON MAY 7, 2022

DIRECT IMPACT RESOURCE ALLOCATION

We understand the importance of being fiscally conscious and recognizing that every dollar we spend is a precious resource that could be used to make a difference in the lives of the children we serve. Our commitment to 100% advocacy means we carefully monitor and manage our finances to ensure that our resources are being used efficiently and effectively.



\$.89 of every \$1 we receive is reinvested into the program

**THAT MEANS 89%
DIRECT IMPACT**

**GREATER THAN
5,000% REVENUE
GROWTH SINCE 2016**

“The level of support we can offer to the children who depend on us and the level of trust bestowed upon us by our community of donors drives our determination to remain fiscally conscious. We keep administrative costs low in order to make the greatest direct impact.”

- COLEEN LACOSTA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PROGRAM IMPACT

STUDENTS SPEAK UP FOR KIDS



SINCE LAUNCHING IN 2020, STUDENTS SPEAK UP FOR KIDS BOASTS

13 ACTIVE CAMPUS CHAPTERS
BENEFITING 1,900+ CHILDREN

Youth-led advocacy has become invaluable in the Speak Up for Kids arsenal! Young people possess unique perspectives and wide-ranging experiences that provide fresh insights and new solutions. When paired with an environment that welcomes intergenerational dialogue, we have created an amazing and shared purpose and partnership that drives sustainable, inclusive change.

By educating youth about the needs of their foster-involved peers and providing guidance and necessary infrastructure, Students Speak Up for Kids empowers youth across Palm Beach County to lead, create, and implement successful peer-to-peer advocacy projects.



LOOK AT THAT PROJECT-SPECIFIC IMPACT



Atlantic Community High School EAGLES



- **Hooks with Heart**, a crocheting club with the mission of teaching the art of crochet while providing a safe space to promote mental health and encourage human connection.
- **2023 Philanthropy Tank Finalists**

Boca High School BOBCATS



- **2023 Great Charity Challenge Awardee**

Created, hosted, and participated in seasonal events like Storybook Village to serve children in foster care. Led by Sophia Mills.

Wellington High School WOLVERINES



- **MUSIC BUDDIES**, a program providing complimentary instruments and music lessons to foster children.
- **Featured in SCHOLASTIC CHOICES, CBS-12 Hometown Heroes** (Founded and led by Anden Toale and Jocelyn Spellman)

Spanish River Community High School SHARKS



- **STEMINISTS** - breaking gender stereotypes in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), led by Alexa Bishop, 2023 Palm Beach Post Pathfinder Award Nominee for Career & Technical Education, and Talya Givoni, 2021 Philanthropy Tank Finalist, this project empowers girls involved in the foster system to code, create computer circuits, and perform chemistry experiments!
- **Palm Beach PEN PAL Project**, mentoring youth to develop reading, writing, social and fine motor skills through written correspondence and care packages. Led by Sofia Scher, 2023 BeWellPBC Mini-Grant Awardee.





PROGRAM IMPACT MUSIC BUDDIES



41 KIDS RECEIVED MUSIC LESSONS
318 PEER-TO-PEER VOLUNTEER HOURS

Music Buddies is testament to the power of educating and empowering future leaders to apply creativity and resourcefulness in service to others. This program, offering instruments, sheet music, and virtual music instruction originated as a way to connect youth to each other through music (while in the height of a global pandemic) continues to thrive!

HIGHLIGHTING HEROISM

MUSIC BUDDIES FOUNDERS - **Anden Toale and Jocelyn Spellman**

Nationally recognized as Local Heroes in SCHOLASTIC CHOICES
Locally featured on CBS-12 News segment, Hometown Heroes



PARENTS SPEAK UP FOR KIDS

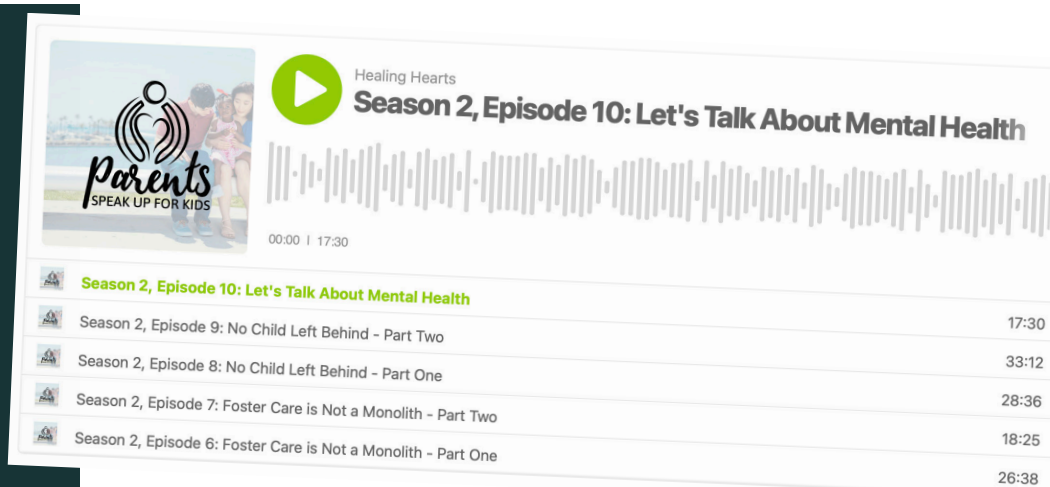


100 PODCAST DOWNLOADS

Another phenomenal student-inspired program, PARENTS Speak Up for Kids serves as a resource aggregator for the foster community. Central to forwarding the mission of 100% advocacy is building awareness around the intricacies of the foster and dependency system. Through the Healing Hearts Podcast, student advocate Sophia Mills has created an information-sharing forum including interviews with those special people working in the foster and dependency system and advocating for our foster children across Palm Beach County.

“We must remember that one determined person can make a significant difference and that a small group of determined people can change the course of history”

- SONIA JOHNSON



PROGRAM IMPACT FLOURISHING FUTURES

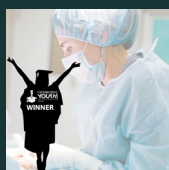


4 SCHOLARSHIPS

Understanding that fewer than half of all youth in foster care achieve high school graduation, with only three percent of that population completing college, it is incumbent upon the 'village', our community, to unite in celebration and support of our youth; both in the foster system AND student-volunteers!

FLOURISHING FUTURES does that by memorializing these milestone events with GED, diploma, and degree completion celebrations, and providing monetary gifts for graduates. This program also funds an essay-based, \$1,000, direct-to-awardee scholarship, to assist students in funding next steps.

MEET SOME OF OUR WINNERS



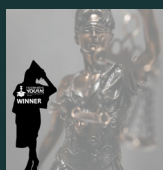
SARAH

Youth volunteer with a passion for community impact and a dream of changing outcomes for children as a pediatric surgeon



LAUREN

Young leader, passionate about volunteerism and bridging barriers pursuing a career in biomedical engineering



ALISHA

Student volunteer focused on mental health advocacy, determined to study law and advocate for children in care



DANIELLE

Future leader who blends creativity and innovation, looking to give voice to the voiceless through a career in speech pathology

SPECIALTY COURT PROGRAMS



WE HAD ZERO (0) CASES RE-ENTER CARE AFTER THEY WERE CLOSED

Therapeutic Court

Our mission of 100% advocacy demands continued insight and oversight, especially with youth facing the most dire circumstances. Therapeutic Court uses a round-table, team approach inclusive of every agency involved in the child's case and monitored through judicial oversight to "protect, serve justice, and be therapeutic."

Early Childhood Court

Achieving normalcy and permanency as soon as possible requires intervention as early as possible. Early Childhood Court places intensive focus on infant and toddler victims to establish those elements foundational to ensuring that children thrive.



PROGRAM IMPACT AMBASSADORS



Ambassadors of Speak Up for Kids are passionate and influential professionals invested in the welfare of children. They act as the conduit between Speak Up for Kids and potential corporate partners, championing child advocacy and collaborating with our Executive Team to bring awareness about child welfare issues to the community.

AMBASSADOR SOCIALS

- Robert, Michelle & Friend's Holiday Party
- Meat Market
- Havana Nights 2023 Gala



MEMBERS

GABY CHANG
INNERISEN

SETH DENSEN
Jupiter Medical Center & FAU

DIANA GILBERT
Kendra Scott

LORI GREENBERG
Cord Blood Registry

KIM KMENTT
Events by Kim K

CATHY OLSEN
Kendra Scott

RICKY PETTY, SR.
Pathways to Prosperity & Petty Capital Realty, Inc.

PRANATI "PRANOO" KUMAR
Rohi's Readery

SETH J. SIGEL
Bank of America, Merrill Lynch

"I support Speak Up for Kids as they do amazing work in helping children find forever homes, shedding light on various needs in our county that sometimes go unnoticed, and create wonderful events where children in care don't have to feel as if they are strangers or burdens to society but rather part of something bigger and important. This organization brings smiles to children's faces and light to their darkest of days. It helps heal some of the scars they have endured."

- SETH DENSEN

COLLABORATION IN ACTION

SUFK Ambassador Pranati "Pranoo" Kumar Event, hosted a fundraiser at her social justice driven children's bookstore and learning center, **Rohi's Readery**. Pranoo is a passionate advocate of critical literacy that promotes inclusivity and diversity.



CYCLE BREAKING IMPACT



CanDee was just shy of her fifth birthday when she was removed from her home due to suffering extreme abuse at the hands of her very own parents. The abuse CanDee experienced was horrific, therefore, when her Guardian ad Litem stepped in, they were determined to help her. CanDee was quiet at first and had a hard time opening up, but over time she opened up and welcomed her GAL as a friend. CanDee told her GAL that she was being teased at school because she has never had a birthday party, so her GAL contacted Speak Up for Kids for help. The team at SUFK was able to create a party fit for a princess for CanDee! **CANDEE CARRIES A PICTURE OF HER AND HER GAL FROM HER BIRTHDAY PARTY EVERYWHERE SHE GOES, AND THAT IS WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO!**



Norman was just eight years old when his Mother passed away from cancer; his Mother, Elaine, was an only child and both of her parents had passed away years before. Elaine's best friend Lucy stepped in and agreed to provide temporary shelter for Norman. However, Lucy had four children of her own and it was becoming a little overwhelming balancing everything; Lucy explained that Elaine never told Norman's ather about him and revealed the identity of Norman's father. Through the Guardian ad Litem program, they were able to contact him. Norman's father, Matthew, was shocked at the news of having a son, but he immediately stepped in to establish paternity and build a relationship with Norman. Matthew did everything he needed to do including making multiple visits with Norman while traveling on limited means. **SPEAK UP FOR KIDS WAS ABLE TO FACILITATE GREYHOUND TICKETS TO FACILITATE VISITS LEADING UP TO FATHER AND SON BEING REUNITED!**



PROGRAM IMPACT FOSTER PALM BEACH



**623 PROSPECTIVE FOSTER PARENTS
WERE CONNECTED TO LOCAL LICENSING AGENCIES RESULTING IN
45 NEW FOSTER HOMES
WHICH OPENED THEIR DOORS TO OUR KIDS THIS YEAR**

We have long realized that the necessity for a multi-faceted approach to adequately supporting children in an over-burdened legal and foster care system requires the increased capacity for residential placement across Palm Beach County.

Foster Palm Beach was created through a Children's Service Council Great Ideas Initiative grant to address the critical need for foster parents in Palm Beach County. Speak Up for Kids funds a Centralized Foster Home Recruiter to increase awareness of the need, to conduct outreach, and to connect prospective foster parents with their preferred licensing agency.

Our community-wide approach educates and demystifies foster care for prospective caregivers while simultaneously providing resources and support for current foster families. We alleviate barriers and empower CHAMPIONS for children. Because every child deserves a home.



SUPPORTED PROGRAM

✦ PBC Guardian Ad Litem Office



23 POSITIONS PROVIDED

Since 2008, **Speak Up for Kids** has partnered with the Guardian ad Litem Office (15th Judicial Circuit, Palm Beach County) to provide capacity building, volunteer recruitment and retention, and direct support to children in the foster care system. Apart from nonprofit staff, **Speak Up for Kids** directly provides 23 advocate positions to the Office of the Guardian ad Litem which supplements the state program capacity to effectively manage the amount of dependency cases in Palm Beach County - where at any given time more than 1,200 children are in need of court advocacy.

Speak Up for Kids stewards federal funding (Victims of Crime Act/VOCA grant) to support capacity building for the Guardian ad Litem Office, while also cultivating partnerships and funding through additional grants, donations, corporate engagement and community support to reinvest in the recruitment and retention of Volunteer Child Advocates, as well as to respond to their direct funding requests to meet the physical, social/emotional, educational and normalcy needs of the children we serve.



1,992
Children Served



833
Children in a Safe,
Permanent Home



506
Volunteer Child
Advocates



1,241
Court Hearings
Attended



12,588
Advocacy Hours
Donated



67,999
Advocacy Miles
Traveled

The Florida Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Office represents abused, abandoned, and neglected children under the Dependency Court's jurisdiction. Our team, including an attorney, volunteer, and child advocate manager, works together to advocate for these children's best interests. We address their physical, educational, mental, emotional, social, and legal needs, aiming to find them a safe, loving, permanent home where they can thrive.

In November 2022, I represented over 100 children and heard stories of trauma, resilience, and survival. One case involved sheltering two children from a mother with a history of endangerment. Despite our objections, the court reunified them with the mother, but her unmanaged mental health issues soon put the children at risk again. We argued for the children's protection, presenting evidence of the mother's ongoing threat. The court agreed and granted our petition for shelter, ensuring the children's safety and well-being.



MARISSA

GAL Attorney funded through SUFK by the Jim Moran Foundation

PARTY FOR OUR CAUSE



REAL HOUSEWIVES TRIVIA BRUNCH

You can't have much more fun at a fundraiser than at this Trivia Brunch. With trivia questions, roaring laughter and epic tribute costumes, these brunch goers raised **OVER**

\$70,000 for our cause.



HAVANA NIGHTS

This year's Cuban themed gala, Havana Nights, featured Caribbean flair and fun that raised greater than **\$150,000** for local children involved in the foster system.



ROBERT, MICHELLE & FRIENDS ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Each year, diehard Palm Beach County child advocates Robert and Michelle host a toy drive and FUN & FRIENDraiser to benefit our kids. This year, their efforts **RAISED \$100,000+!** They exemplify the power of community!



WINTERFEST

With **greater than 500 children** in attendance, our Stan Klett Sr. Annual Winterfest continues to be a tremendous success drawing youth and families across the county! From face painting to dancing to arts and crafts, this event holds something for EVERYONE and is a cherished, anticipated event.



STORYBOOK VILLAGE

Every year, we celebrate the power of books by inviting over 500+ of our foster care kids in Palm Beach County to adopt a book. Our book carnival is a wonderful engagement opportunity that gives sponsors a chance to

see the lives they are touching. We also have the chance to make real impacts as we pour into their hearts and break the cycles of abuse and neglect.



10th ANNUAL STARS GALA

This year we held our 10th Annual Stars Gala in honor of our angels Larry Geller and Lou Scher. We were entertained by the best and raised **OVER \$4000 for our local foster kids.**

SEE MORE OF OUR EPIC EVENTS ON OUR WEBSITE

EXPLORE MORE & JOIN US





INFUSED WITH EQUITY

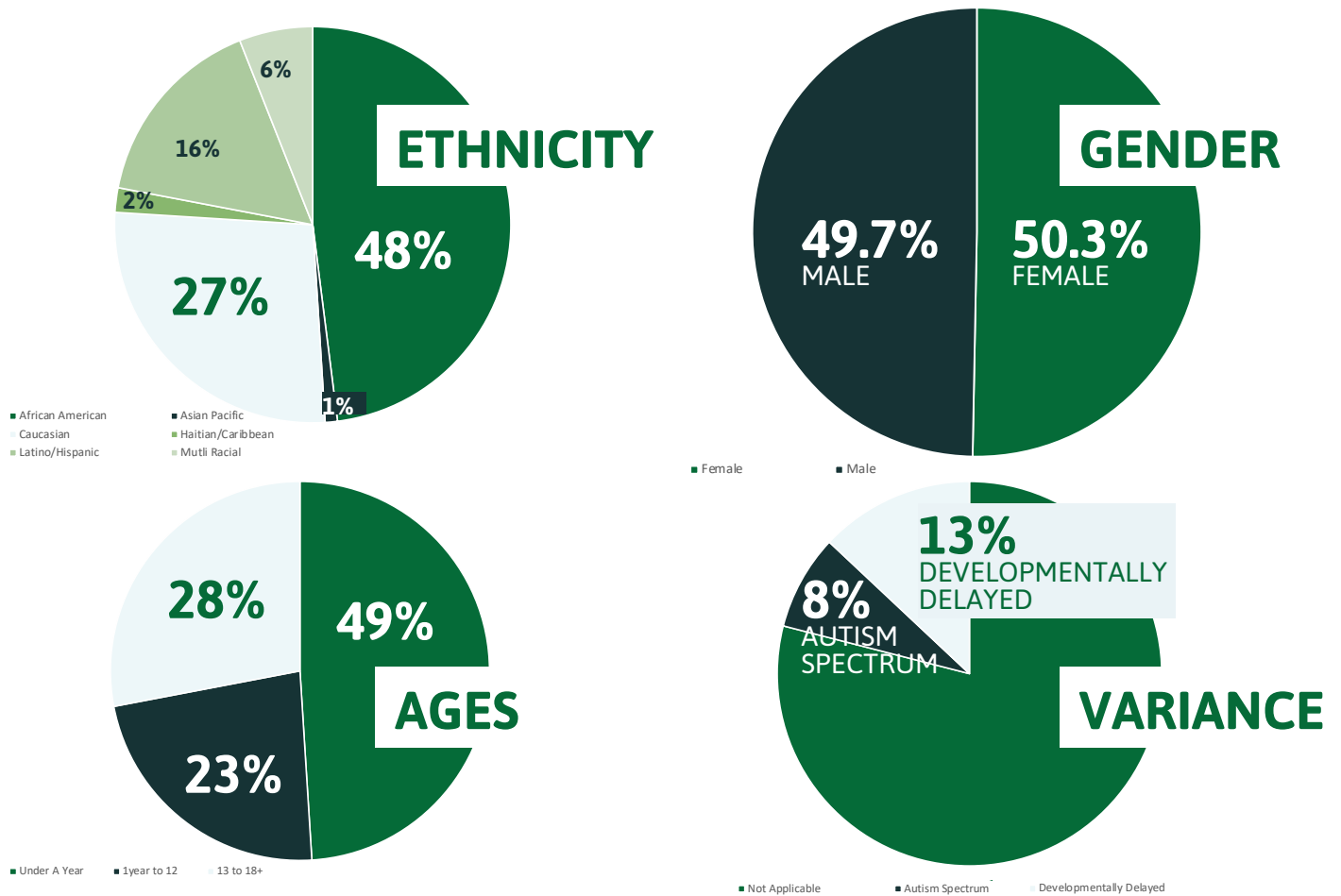
Speak Up for Kids is dedicated to providing critical support and resources to children impacted by abuse and neglect. We sincerely believe every child deserves the opportunity to heal and thrive, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and developmental and cognitive levels.

In 2021-2022, we, along with other charities, governmental organizations, and municipalities, partnered with Advancing the Mission in a board-led initiative to understand better race, diversity, and inclusion, and how to apply it across our organization and throughout our programs.

Not all child abuse victims come from the same backgrounds, and their needs may differ significantly. For example, some may require more intensive mental health services, while others may need additional educational support. Speak Up for Kids promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion because it benefits kids by increasing access to services and enhancing outcomes.

THE CHILDREN BEHIND THE SERVICES

Data collected for 2022-2023 shows for the 1,900+ children served in Palm Beach County:



OUR CORE PURPOSE IS TO BE OF SERVICE TO ALL CHILDREN, ENSURING THEIR WELL-BEING IS OUR UTMOST PRIORITY. WE ARE DEDICATED TO CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT WHERE FOSTER CHILDREN IN PALM BEACH COUNTY FEEL DEEPLY HEARD, TRULY SEEN, AND PROVIDED WITH UNWAVERING SUPPORT.

COMMITTED TO TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

We prioritize transparency and accountability in our financial practices, regularly reviewing and reporting on our budget and expenditures to our stakeholders. We avoid unnecessary expenses and seek opportunities for cost-saving measures without compromising the quality of our programs and services.



94%

CHARITY NAVIGATOR RATING

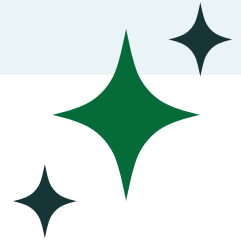
"Exceeds or meets best practices and industry standards across almost all areas." -Charity Navigator



5th Year South Florida

Leading Nonprofit

GOOD NEWS MAGAZINE



4th Year

Top Rated

GREAT NONPROFITS



6th Year

Platinum Seal of Transparency

GUIDESTAR/CANDID

Most widely adopted symbol of transparency in the U.S. social sector.



Nonprofits First Hats Off Awards

Nonprofit of the Year

(MEDIUM CATEGORY)

ON THE HORIZON

Speak Up for Kids has experienced tremendous growth, and we plan to expand our programs through strategic investments to build partnerships and engage with our supporters

- Meet the evolving needs of the growing number of children needing support
- Create the necessary infrastructure to provide every child with individualized advocacy and support
- Provide support and resources to families caring for foster children
- Engage more community members through the Volunteer & Ambassador programs
- Establish and maintain an ongoing inventory of critical aid items
- Create awareness to expand the number of foster homes in Palm Beach County



We envision a promising future where 100% advocacy is the norm for every child in the dependency system. We will continually increase our capacity and expand our reach until every child feels nurtured and supported with access to necessary, valuable, and potential-actualizing connections and resources.

THANK YOU!

“As for the future, your task is not to foresee it but to enable it.”

- ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPERY

SUPPORTERS

Only through our stakeholders - individual donors, corporate partners, legacy gifters - across Palm Beach County are we able to fully engage, support, and strive towards 100% advocacy for child victims. Because of all of you, 1400+ children received representation leading to security, normalcy, and permanence!



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS OF #SPEAKUPFORKIDS

Kathy & Paul Leone

Ken Thomas

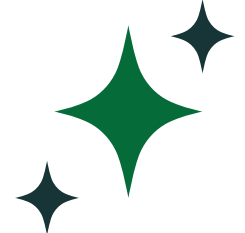
Vice Mayor Gregg Weiss, Palm Beach County

Celeste Jackson

Stan Klett Jr.

Robert Donohoo & Michelle Stokes & Friends

THANK YOU to all of our anonymous donors for your support. We **SEE** you.



SPONSORS

Baxter
Brodner Foundation
Clay Fisher
CVS
Elhapa
Ernst & Young

Flagler System Institute for
Innovation
Jayne Keith
Jim Moran Foundation
JTK Foundation
Louis Berkowitz Family Foundation

Mirasol
Morgan Stanley
Networking to Help Children
PBSO
Riggins Crab House
Roselyn Meyers Foundation

Scaife
Simon Foundation
Target
Wycliffe



Your Philanthropy
Our Community
Better Together

Good food, Good life



JONES FOSTER



FIRST REPUBLIC
It's a privilege to serve you*



Colleen Mullaney's Estate

Friends of Stan Klett

PARTNERS



JUNIOR LEAGUE OF BOCA RATON



NonprofitsFirst

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
LARRY GELLER



An Era Ends - A Legacy Continues. With heavy hearts, we mourn the passing of Larry Geller, half of the dynamic team known as the “Batman and Robin” of child advocacy. He and his Guardian ad Litem partner, Lou Scher, have left an indelible mark on the lives of hundreds of Palm Beach County child abuse victims. Their determination to change children’s lives led them to work together as a team serving more than 100 children and impacting thousands more through their fundraising efforts.

Charter members of **Speak Up for Kids**, Lou and Larry were intimately aware of the needs of children in care and the funding shortfalls that stood in the way of fulfilling many needs and several wants. So, while brainstorming ways in which they could raise money, they posed the question, “What better way to raise money than to have a party?” That conversation morphed into a star-studded annual gala, drawing larger crowds each year with tickets selling out in mere days and raising hundreds of thousands of dollars used to satisfy the needs of local children. Unfortunately, we had lost Lou Scher in 2018 at the age of 83.

Larry Geller continued to carry the mantle of advocacy, coordinating the 2022 gala - which we secretly presented in honor of his 90th birthday – giving tribute to his dedication. He nevertheless continued to advocate on behalf of our most vulnerable. In March of 2023, we held the 10th Annual Speak Up for Kids Gala where the lives and accomplishments of Lou and Larry were celebrated and honored.

Though they are no longer with us physically, their lives and voices live on in our offices, hallways, courtrooms, and hearts. Together, they impacted thousands of children, and the light they shone in Palm Beach County will never be extinguished.

The era has come to an end, but the legacy continues.



TOGETHER WE WILL

EMPOWER foster youth to *thrive*

DISRUPT *negative cycles*

CHANGE *lives*



Speak Up for Kids
OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

561 408 7779

www.SpeakUpforKidsPBC.org

info@SpeakUpforKidsPBC.org