# Children's Service Society of Wisconsin Annual Report 2020



Kids deserve the best.

In March 2020, the world changed in ways we could not have previously imagined.

Child

Global efforts to protect one another resulted in an upheaval of personal and professional practices that left many scrambling in unchartered territory. Children's Wisconsin staff, foster parents, funders, donors and community partners came together in astounding ways to ensure that we could continue to provide care and support for the thousands of individuals we have the honor to serve.

Imagine the added stress for a teen suddenly in need of an Out-of-home placement who had also been exposed to COVID-19. In March 2020, we did not know much about COVID-19 other than it was highly contagious and that it had the potential to cause serious illness or death, even in otherwise seemingly healthy individuals. We also knew this young man may pose a health risk to others due to his exposure. The true heroes of this story were the amazing Children's Wisconsin licensed foster parents who were able to set their fears aside and put this young man's needs first. They thought about how scared and alone he must feel and recognized the opportunity they had to care for him and make sure he had a safe and secure environment during a particularly terrifying time. They were the first of many of our incredible foster parents who determined they wanted to be a part of the story of caring for kids, even during times of great uncertainty. Children's Wisconsin staff were also determined to make a difference and expressed concern for our families who were, like all of us, isolated and thrown quickly into new roles with limited access to resources and help. Parents who were already facing stressful situations in their lives had to take on teaching roles for their children, lost access to child care, faced transportation barriers, became ill with COVID-19, and/or lost or could not continue in their jobs. Furthermore, in many situations, family members began to struggle with domestic violence and child maltreatment as a result of long periods of isolation and stress with no social supports. Children's Wisconsin staff, who never wavered in maintaining a connection with their clients, quickly realized there was never a time when our services were more important. Staff shifted quickly to virtual connections with families, used creativity to stay connected, and provided access to support for basic needs and for social, emotional and physical safety. Staff-driven efforts at the local community level helped to leverage resources to gather and distribute care packages that included diapers, gift cards, cleaning supplies, games and more to families. Our "front porch" deliveries allowed us to stay connected to our clients while giving critical supplies needed to navigate the early months of the pandemic.

Many Children's Wisconsin funders supported these outreach efforts, allowing creative use of program dollars to shift toward tangible supports for families. They also supported Children's in utilizing technology to conduct virtual visits, training and other forms of engagement to meet client needs and contract expectations while also managing the health risks of COVID-19 both for our client families and our staff. Without funder support, 2020 would have been a very difficult year, but with their partnership we found ways to be successful. We are thankful for their trust and collaboration.

In this 2020 annual report you will read about the services we provide and some incredible success stories. We are proud and grateful we were able to serve 11,540 people, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. As we move forward, we look forward to finding ways to integrate many of the new, innovative methods developed over the past year to continue providing services and access in the ways that are most responsive to our clients' needs.

Thank you for your ongoing support. It is only through the strength of our staff, foster parents, funders, donors and community partners that we can achieve our vision for Wisconsin's children to be the healthiest in the country.

Sincerely,

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Bob Duncan Board Chair, Children's Service Society of Wisconsin Executive Vice-President, Children's Wisconsin

# Children's Service Society of Wisconsin

For more than 130 years Children's Service Society of Wisconsin (CSSW) has changed the lives of children and families through effective, empowering programming that strives to build, sustain and enhance a nurturing environment for Wisconsin's children and youth. CSSW has evolved to become the largest not-for-profit, nonsectarian provider of community-based child and family services and child welfare services in the state. Our work is a key part of advancing Children's Wisconsin's vision for our state's children to be the healthiest in the nation.

CSSW's service providers positively impacted the lives of over 11,000 children and families in 2020 through our core service areas: community education and injury prevention, mental and behavioral health, family preservation and support, child welfare, and child advocacy and protection.

Our services, combined with the medical expertise of Children's Wisconsin, bring child health and welfare together to transform the health and well-being of children, families and communities — because kids deserve the best.

# Did you know?

Staying healthy is mostly about what happens outside the doctor's office.





## **Statewide Presence**

**Antigo** N4013 US Hwy. 45 Antigo, WI 54409 (715) 627-1414

**Baraboo** 626 14th St., Suite A Baraboo, WI 53913 (608) 356-3019

Black River Falls W11109 Rogers Rd. Black River Falls, WI 54615 (715) 284-3001

## Burlington

c/o Love, Inc. 480 South Pine St. Burlington, WI 53105 (262) 763-6226

#### Eau Claire

2004 Highland Ave., Suite M Eau Claire, WI 54701 (715) 835-5915

Elkhorn

W4063 Hwy. NN Elkhorn, WI 53121 (262) 741-1440 (262) 743-2221

Janesville

32 E. Racine St., Suite 190 Janesville, WI 53545 (608) 314-9006

## Kenosha

8207 22nd Ave., Suite 155 Kenosha, WI 53143 (262) 652-5522 **Kenosha** 6809 122nd Ave. Kenosha, WI 53142 (262) 653-2266

Madison 1716 Fordem Ave. Madison, WI 53704 (608) 221-3511

Marshfield 725 S. Central Ave. Marshfield, WI 54449 (715) 387-2729

Merrill 712 East 2nd St. Merrill, WI 54452 (715) 539-9228

Milwaukee – 76th Street Fair Park Business Center 620 S. 76th Str., Suite 120 Milwaukee, WI 53214 (414) 453-1400

## Milwaukee – Ascension Lutheran

1300 S. Layton Blvd., Room S-301 Milwaukee, WI 53215 (414) 294-3849

Milwaukee - Sojourner Family Peace Center 619 West Walnut St. Milwaukee, WI 53212

## **Milwaukee Visitation Center**

6737 W. Washington St., Suite 3115 Milwaukee, WI 53214 Reception A: (414) 337-4492 Reception B: (414) 337-4493 Neenah 325 N. Commercial St., Suite 400 Neenah, WI 54956 (920) 969-7955

**Racine** 8800 Washington Ave., Suite 400 Mount Pleasant, WI 53406 (262) 633-3591

Rhinelander 3716 Country Drive Rhinelander, WI 54501 (715) 361-6300

## **Stevens Point**

1466 Water St., Suite 2 Stevens Point, WI 54481 (715) 341-6672

#### Wausau

705 S. 24th Ave., Suite. 400 Wausau, WI 54401 (715) 848-1457 Family Resource Center: (715) 845-6747

#### Wauwatosa

Woodlake III-Business & Tech. Ctr. 10200 W. Innovation Drive, Suite 350 Wauwatosa, WI 53226 (414) 337-1298



For a list of services provided at each location, please see: childrenswi.org/location-directory

# Your support makes a difference

We're determined to make Wisconsin's children the healthiest in the nation, but we cannot do it alone. While we receive funding from government contracts, United Way and client fees, we could not continue providing many services without the generous support of individual, corporate and foundation donations. Critical services such as mental and behavioral health care and Child Advocacy Centers are only partially funded by sustainable revenue streams and depend on financial support from other sources. Your support helps us improve the health of our most at-risk children and families across the state.

# 2020 Financial Results (pre-audit)

## **Operating Revenue**

Other	\$67,167
Purchase of Service	\$32,553,428
Fundraising	\$2,972,771
United Way	\$1,473,336
Service Fees	\$3,120,716

Total Operating Revenue **\$40,187,418** 

## **Operating Expenses**

Community Education and Injury Prevention	\$1,670,925	
Mental and Behavioral Health	\$7,290,641	
Family Preservation and Support	\$7,178,862	
Child Welfare	\$28,758,924	
Child Advocacy and Protection	\$2,190,107	
Institute for Child and Family Well-Being	\$599,649	
Other	\$978,515	
Total Operating Expenses <b>\$48,667,623</b>		
Income (Loss) From Operations \$(8,480,205)		
Net Nonoperating Gain (Loss) <b>\$(5,484,236)</b>		

Excess (Deficit) of Revenue Over Expenses \$(13,964,441)

# By the numbers

## **Community Education and Injury Prevention**

Project Ujima	_ 530
Volunteer Respite	23

## **Mental and Behavioral Health**

Includes individual counseling, psychological testing, group counseling and school-based mental health

## **Family Preservation and Support**

Home visiting and Healthy Start (early childhood services)921
Family Support, SEFEL, Early Childhood Connector Zone, Education and Employment Specialist programs,
and Youth Innovations261
Family Resource Centers
(including group-based programming and Triple P)2,032

## **Child Welfare**

Family Case Management	1,680
Intensive In-Home	120
Project Home	101
Respite	1,062
Public Adoption	148
Treatment and Regular Foster Care	216
Supervised Visitation and Visitation Centers	399

## **Child Advocacy and Protection**

Includes services provided at Child Advocacy Centers

553 Families and kids served

3,667 Families and kids served

3,214 Families and kids served

3,726 Families and kids served

BO Families and kids served

Children's Wisconsin also provides mental and behavioral health and child advocacy and protection services that are not reflected above.





## **Basic Needs**

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Many of our client families struggle financially, leading to food insecurity, housing insecurity and challenges paying for basic needs. To help meet those families' immediate needs, Children's Service Society of Wisconsin created **Robyn's Nest**. Robyn's Nest provides new and gently used clothing, new hygiene products, infant items, toys, books and diapers, all free of charge to families. Children's staff can use Robyn's Nest to offer families tangible supports, increasing the client's level of trust and engagement with our other services.

While we had a brief pause in services, in April 2020, a small but mighty team formed to bridge the gap of basic needs for the most vulnerable families in our care. The Care Package Project Team focused their efforts on families within the Intensive-In-Home Program, recent reunifications and unlicensed caregivers. In total, we delivered 352 care packages to families' front porches. We provided 550 children of various ages with educational supplies, mental health and well-being materials, hygiene and diaper supplies, cooperative games, and arts and crafts. We were also able provide 93 of those families with a \$50 food gift card.

Despite the uncertainty of 2020, Robyn's Nest safely adapted, maintained those critical donor partnerships and continued to serve the children and families in our care with the assistance of three dedicated staff organizing incoming donations.

# **Community Education and Injury Prevention**

Factors outside the doctor's office impact a child's health — from home, school and neighborhood environments to choices about food, exercise and safety. That's why Children's Wisconsin embraces opportunities to reach and support families outside of medical settings. Community Health and Education programs and services strive to improve the health of children, families and communities.

**Volunteer Respite** provides a much-needed break for families caring for medically fragile children. These caregivers are under tremendous daily stress as they juggle complex medical interventions and advocate for their child with other demands of life. Through regularly scheduled events that include a full day of fun activities for children with special needs, the Volunteer Respite program gives parents or caregivers an opportunity to recharge and refresh, ultimately strengthening the entire family.

**Project Ujima** aims to stop the cycle of community violence by supporting youth and families on their journey of healing and recovery. When patients are admitted to Children's Wisconsin Emergency Department and Trauma Center for an injury due to violence, program staff are swiftly engaged to support the youth and their families through this traumatic experience. This voluntary, family-centered program offers a wide variety of services and resources, including crisis intervention and case management, mentoring, and mental health and medical services over approximately 18 months. This transformative program has been shown to increase participants' resilience and reduce their risk of reengaging in violence.

**Prevent Child Abuse Wisconsin** (PCAW)'s mission is to build community resources, provide training and public awareness, and advocate to strengthen child abuse prevention efforts. As a result of the pandemic, the 2020 Together for Children conference was cancelled. Instead a keynote presenter agreed to provide his session virtually for registrants free of charge. Retired police Lt. Joe Laramie of the National Criminal Justice Training Center provided 178 conference registrants education about the correlation between child sexual abuse material collection and hands-on offending. Throughout the year, our team also trained professionals in the administration of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire for early childhood development and social-emotional development with families.

**Awareness to Action** (A2A) trains youth-serving organizations to develop policies and procedures to prevent child sexual abuse. In 2020, staff worked to adapt the in-person curriculum to a virtual format. Additionally, the program took in-person, module-based training and developed an online version that can be completed at an organization's own pace. Staff also developed all new materials to correspond with the online version.



# **Counseling – Mental and Behavioral Health**

Our vision is that every child and teenager in Wisconsin will receive the right support for their mental and behavioral health, at the right time, in order to grow up healthy and thrive.

Achieving this vision depends on investment in three priority areas:

- 1. Early detection, prevention and education
- 2. Access
- 3. Reducing stigma

Our mental and behavioral health team worked hard to prioritize and expedite our vision goals because our kids cannot wait any longer.

Prior to April 2020, Children's Wisconsin did not have a single telehealth visit for mental and behavioral health — there wasn't even the ability to do so. But in 2020, the mental and behavioral health team — which includes child and family counseling — has completed nearly 50,000 telehealth visits with kids across the state. In fact, even as in-person visits have resumed, telehealth still accounts for the majority of the mental and behavioral health appointments.

Additionally, we hired a total of 15 therapists-in-training into our new **Therapist Fellowship Program**. They trained in nine different clinics in eight counties across the state. This team of up-and-coming therapists served more than 560 families and provided more than 5,200 therapy sessions. By the end of 2020, the first five trainees were completing their required hours for licensure and were hired onto the Children's mental and behavioral health team to continue to provide access and care to Wisconsin's kids and families!

Our **Early Childhood Mental Health Program** that launched in 2019 continued to grow in expertise and capacity, adding specialty therapists trained in infant and early mental health to some of our outpatient programs across the state. This program is designed to detect and prevent early mental health issues.

Finally, our **School-Based Mental Health Program** grew in 2020 during the pandemic! We expanded to seven new schools across the state. We also continued to support the more than 50 schools we serve, adapting to meet their ever-changing needs. We flexed between all-virtual telehealth, hybrid, and for some, back to full-time in-person classes. The isolation and fear brought about by 2020 has increased the need for mental health services by students, teachers, faculty and parents. We reached out and offered virtual parent and community education sessions, drop-in support and consultation, group therapies and some creative "Zoom rooms" to engage kids who were reluctant to try telehealth.





# **Family Preservation and Support**

Our statewide family preservation and support programs promote safe and stable families in a variety of ways. Our **Home Visiting** programs work individually with pregnant and parenting women and families by providing information, resources, support and education. We follow evidence-based models such as Healthy Families America, Parents as Teachers, and Nurturing Parent.

Partnering with the Black Child Development Institute of Milwaukee, we established a Community Action Network that includes Health Start grant partners, community stakeholders and Healthy Start program participants working to create community-level change on health disparities for African Americans in Milwaukee County. **Healthy Start** is a federal grant-funded program aimed at eliminating health inequities for African American women and children with the goals of reducing infant mortality, increasing access to early prenatal care and removing barriers to health care access. The program uses maternal health navigators to support Milwaukee County families by promoting and enhancing physical and behavioral health, helping address basic needs and providing community resources for concerns like family violence.

Our **Family Resource Centers** provide parents and caregivers with empowering information and support programs — all free of charge to families — to promote the healthy growth and development of children and strengthen family relationships. All Family Resource Centers facilitate parent education classes that follow evidence-based models such as ACT Raising Safe Kids or Nurturing Parent. Our Play and Learn classes follow the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards. Most centers also offer parenting phone support, delivering tailored and confidential parenting information and resources to callers over the phone.



# **Child Welfare**

Children's is committed to ensuring that every child has a safe and stable home. To advance that goal, we provide an array of child welfare services in Milwaukee County under a state contract administered by the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services. Our primary charge is to ensure child safety, permanency and well-being. Our child welfare services are guided by our family-centered practice: Our priority is to keep families intact and maintain family connections.

Our **Intensive In-Home** (IIH) program partners with families to ensure child safety in the home while simultaneously providing services to enhance parents' protective capacities. Families in our **Family Case Management** (FCM) program are served under the jurisdiction of the Milwaukee County Children's Court, with the goal of reunifying families as quickly and safely as possible. When children need to be placed in out-of-home care, our foster care licensing and placement program matches children to caregivers equipped to meet their needs. Our Family Support program works closely with our IIH and FCM programs to support in-home safety plans and timely reunification of parents and children when separated. Our trauma-informed, evidence-based services focus on safety measures, parenting education, mentoring and strengthening family interactions.



Our statewide **Treatment Foster Care Program** (TFC) is designed to address the comprehensive well-being needs of children. Offered throughout Wisconsin's 72 counties, our TFC Program is a community-based, child-centered, family-focused approach that provides out-of-home care placement and services for those children and youth who have significant

special needs that require specialized treatment services beyond the scope of basic foster care.

The TFC program is a certified provider of the evidence-based TFC model Together Facing the Challenge. This model, researched during a multiyear study conducted through Duke University, found that the three factors largely responsible for helping children in treatment foster care succeed are:

- Supportive and involved relationships between TFC social workers and treatment foster parents
- Effective use of trauma-informed behavior management strategies by treatment foster parents
- Supportive and involved relationships between treatment foster parents and the youth in their care

Through a seven-session curriculum and home-based 1:1 coaching exercises and tools, this model supports relationship development and teaches effective trauma-informed behavior management strategies to bring practical solutions to everyday problems. To evaluate model effectiveness, the TFC Program implemented the use of the Child Parent Relationship Scale in 2019. The Child Parent Relationship Scale is a self-report instrument completed by foster mothers and fathers that assesses parents' perceptions of their relationships with their foster child.

Through the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families performance measures process, the TFC statewide program has been rated as one of the top programs in the state for performance outcomes annually since 2013.

Through our contract with the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, Children's offers **Public Adoptions** programming to 18 Wisconsin counties. The primary goal of our adoption program is to provide all foster children who are in need of a permanent home with an adoptive family that will offer them:

- The rights and protections that are derived from a legal parent-child relationship
- The opportunity to experience the emotional security, growth and development resulting from sound family relationships
- The social status and identity derived from being part of a family entity
- The protection, nurturing and care necessary for physical growth, development and well-being

# **Child Advocacy and Protection Program**

Children's Wisconsin is a national leader in child abuse pediatrics and child advocacy. The Child Advocacy and Protection Services (CAPS) program is the nation's largest hospitalbased network of Child Advocacy Centers. All seven centers are accredited by the National Children's Alliance.

Our CAPS program is a team of medical professionals, forensics interviewers, advocate case managers and therapists who work together to ensure that the evaluation of an abuse allegation minimizes the re-traumatization of a child. We collaborate closely with law enforcement and Child Protective Services to ensure, as often as possible, that a child only has to be seen and tell their story once. Our advocacy work helps to start the healing process for children and their caregivers.

In 2020, the CAPS program partnered with Children's Wisconsin Foundation to engage the support of Panda Cares to expand child life services at our CACs.

Child life specialists are specially trained to provide evidence-based, developmentally and psychologically appropriate interventions as a child prepares for a medical evaluation or forensic interview.

Placing child life specialists in our CACs ensures we deliver care and services in the most kid-friendly ways — contributing to comfort, healing and stronger health outcomes.

In 2022, the Panda Cares Foundation will begin to financially support additional child life specialists across the CAPS program.

# Minimizing Trauma

The Child Advocacy and Protection Services (CAPS) program uses a victim-centered, strength-based approach to prevent re-traumatizing children and caregivers. Our advocate case managers are a critical link in responding to the needs of families. They provide information, support, service coordination, and follow up to families before, during and after their CAC visit.



The Walworth County Child Advocacy Center provided advocacy and support for a young mother and her two small children after the family was found sleeping in their car. Our advocate case manager listened to the mother as she described her recent struggles, concerns and needs. She built trust with the mother by providing support using a trauma-informed approach. By the end of the CAC visit, the advocate case manager provided the family with diapers, food and other necessities while also linking them to a variety of community services and supports. The family left the CAC with hope and were able to start on a journey to heal.





# Institute for Child and Family Well-Being 2020 Annual Report

Children thrive when they have regular interactions with responsive, caring adults. Families experiencing significant stressors related to financial insecurity, housing instability, or the impact of systemic and interpersonal trauma can be overwhelmed with stress, interrupting those interactions. The mission of the **Institute for Child and Family Well-Being** is to improve the lives of children and families coping with an overload of stress by implementing effective programs, conducting cutting-edge research, engaging communities and promoting systems change. The Institute for Child and Family Well-Being is a unique community-university partnership between Children's Wisconsin and the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

2020 presented unique challenges for addressing how we might support organizations, communities and families to navigate uncertainty and stress. Like many others, the ICFW's works shifted to supporting virtual efforts in sharing knowledge, advancing practice and developing new practices that could be effective in the "new normal."



# 2020 Spotlight:

## Parenting with P.R.I.D.E

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we recognized that it is imperative to meet the mental and behavioral health needs of families through safe, convenient and swift approaches. Providing telehealth services in the context of Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) allows for evidence-based treatments to reach more families in a shorter period of time. As a result, waitlist times decrease for families seeking treatment. As many children and families are socially isolated during these times, virtual group-based therapy offers a sense of connection and community that otherwise would not be available right now.

Children's Wisconsin's ICFW team provided an eight-week virtual therapy group for parents/ caregivers and a child in their care: Parenting with P.R.I.D.E. This group is being facilitated by licensed mental and behavioral health clinicians and master's-level student interns, and it includes components from the evidence-based intervention PCIT. Providing this group-based service through telehealth offers caregivers and children the opportunity to learn with and from one another in a supportive online environment from the comfort and safety of their own homes.

Parenting with P.R.I.D.E. helps caregivers of young children manage challenging behaviors including not listening, difficulty with transitions, acting out and handling big emotions. Each family is able to learn tangible strategies that promote positive behaviors, enhance the caregiver-child relationship, and decrease undesired behaviors through engaging activities and live coaching with a PCIT-trained therapist. Additionally, this group benefits parents who may identify as overwhelmed, depressed, stressed, feeling guilty or confused about how to best meet the needs of their children who might be struggling with focus on tasks or changes in daily life. Parents who have previously participated in the ICFW's PCIT-based groups have provided feedback that they feel less isolated and have experienced a reduction in parenting stress.

Specifically, the group format of the Parenting with P.R.I.D.E. program allows for virtual service delivery to a maximum of six caregiver/child dyads (families) through telehealth. Dyads include children between the ages of 2.5-5 years who were screened for inclusion criteria prior to intake. Caregivers access weekly therapy appointments through Zoom on Children's Wisconsin MyChart, the web-based portal for their child's electronic medical record. Services are provided in the following format:

- 60- to 90-minute intake appointment including baseline dyadic observation of caregiver and child
- One-hour group session per week for six weeks
- One-hour individual graduation session including post-treatment dyadic observation of caregiver and child



Children's Wisconsin plans to continue to utilize group-based therapy approaches for children and families beyond the pandemic as we extend the lessons learned from Parenting with P.R.I.D.E. to both replicate this practice and support other group-based offerings. Other notable ICFW efforts in 2020 included:

- We started the Executive Functioning Across Generations feasibility study, a project with Children's Home and Society of America, the **Center for the Developing Child at Harvard,** and The Family Partnership of Minneapolis through the Frontiers of Innovation program focused on enhancing executive functioning skills during virtual services.
- We continued to expand our Center of Excellence in the Trauma and Recovery Project for training clinicians in trauma-informed evidence-based interventions. In 2020 we trained more than 40 clinicians in PCIT or TF-CBT, bringing our three-year total to over 125 clinicians trained. Children's Center of Excellence has grown to around 30 clinicians providing at least one of the three modalities while also screening over 1,000 kids for trauma in the third year of the grant.
- In late 2019 the ICFW started a social media presence, launching both Facebook and LinkedIn pages, which have seen significant growth in 2020 with over 612 new total followers across both platforms. The ICFW also continued to advance our written work with eight new practice briefs, written by Children's Wisconsin staff, and nine peerreviewed journal publications. The ICFW also produced eight webinars, which included team members as well as other experts in the field, since April 2020.

We also supported the COVID Resilience plan, a strategic learning initiative focused on identifying and elevating innovative practices in our CSSW programs during the pandemic. A statewide survey of our participants showed that 42% of parents preferred virtual services. The lessons learned highlighted opportunities for clearer support of virtual services and new opportunities to include parent voice in our work as we find a new normal post-COVID.

Sincerely,



Gabriel McGaughey, MSSW Co-director gmcgaughey@chw.org



Josh Mersky, PhD Co-director mersky@uwm.edu

#### uwm.edu/icfw



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