



*Partnering for **safe** and **healthy** communities.*



2022 IMPACT REPORT

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Our 2022 Timeline

Winter 2022

Cornerstones of Care begins its Time Away policy, which provides flexibility and work-life balance for team members. It also initiates nine paid holidays, beginning with Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in 2022.

President and CEO Denise Cross announces she is stepping away from her role. Chief Development Officer Chad Harris is named interim CEO and a task force is formed to hire her replacement.

Spring 2022

Cornerstones of Care's Build Trybe program announces participation in a federal grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to fund a program alongside Heartland Conservation Alliance. The program will provide training in environmental careers to Build Trybe youth.

Royals Charities and other generous donors contribute to build a new playground on the Ozanam Campus. The playground opening included a visit from Royals' mascot, Sluggerrr.



Doing More Well



One of my first public acts as Cornerstones of Care President and CEO involved wielding a chainsaw to cut a two-by-four board that served as a “ribbon” for the grand opening of The Shop. The new workspace, sponsored through a Stanley Black & Decker grant, teaches youth involved in our Build Trybe program marketable skills in the building trades.

It wasn't in the script for me to cut the board, but when I was offered a hard hat, goggles, and a chainsaw, I thought, “Sure. Why not?” In July, I was

honored to be named the organization's next President and CEO. Throughout last year's leadership transition, the organization continued its focus on providing trauma-informed care, working within the foster care system, and provide education and training to parents, caretakers, and educators.

When I arrived, I witnessed extraordinary community support of Cornerstones of Care, including Royals Charities and other donors funding a playground on the Ozanam Campus. Our Build Trybe program participated in a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant alongside Heartland Conservation Alliance in preparing Build Trybe youth for careers in conservation. I attended my first Spirit Gala and experienced first-hand the incredible generosity of our donors.

I came into an organization with roots going back more than 150 years and serves nearly 15,000 youth and families in Missouri, Kansas, and beyond. I began a 100-day educational listening tour to develop a vision and framework for the future.

I began processing what I heard from team members and shareholders through the lens of the 3 Ps: Purpose, People, and Presence. That framework served as a metaphorical chainsaw to cut through the noise and get to what makes Cornerstones of Care extraordinary.

Purpose defines our driving imperative, which is led by our people — our greatest asset — who courageously do challenging work every day. I also listened for the connection with the children and families we serve. Our mission of partnering for safe, healthy communities requires us to be present in the community, both inside and outside our organization.

Summer 2022

Cornerstones of Care announces that Merideth Rose is hired as the next President and CEO.

Through an Empower Makers Grant from Stanley Black and Decker, Build Trybe opens The Shop, a midtown Kansas City workshop for youth apprentices in the woodworking and metalworking trades.

Fall 2022

Jill Beck is hired as the new Chief Financial Officer and Merideth Rose announces a new Executive Leadership Team.

Through a comprehensive evaluation process, Cornerstones of Care becomes recertified in trauma-informed care by the Sanctuary Institute, who called Cornerstones of Care “a model of ongoing development and sustainability of the Sanctuary Model as a trauma responsive organizational culture.”

Cornerstones of Care team members launch a book drive for our youth.



Through the support of our generous donors, the Spirit Gala hits a fundraising record.

The Kansas Department of Children and Families announces that the number of youth in out-of-home foster care in Kansas' Area 5 (Wyandotte and Leavenworth counties) drops below 600 and has been reduced by 30 percent since Cornerstones of Care began serving the area in 2019.

“Purpose defines our driving imperative, which is led by our people — our greatest asset — who courageously do challenging work every day.”

Merideth Rose, President and Chief Executive Officer

Defining our purpose required a driving imperative to amplify our leadership's commitment to the 3 Ps. How to sum up our commitment to those inside of Cornerstones of Care, our community partners, and those we serve? We developed CARE: Courageous Action Requires Everyone. CARE has become a rallying cry as we share stories of our purpose, people, and presence. It resonates with our mission to engage community partners.

In sharing this vision with our leadership team, I emphasized that our goal in 2023 is to make sure we “do more of well” before we try to “do more of more.” Doing more well includes ensuring our people work in the best environment possible. Last December, our board approved our proposal to enhance our compensation and benefits to remain competitive in the market. We have increased salaries for current and future team members, including absorbing increased insurance premium costs. Managing our team member's physical and mental health is crucial to their self-care. In 2022, we completed re-certification with the Sanctuary Institute to ensure that safety and self-care are institutional values.

We continued our presence in 2022. The grants mentioned above, along with our public events, brought us closer to the community. Our team worked behind the scenes as well. In the Kansas area we serve, we worked with the state to lower the number of youth in out-of-home foster care. That number has dropped nearly 30 percent since we began our work in Kansas in 2019, a historic accomplishment achieved by the only placement agency providing foster care permanency work throughout the state — Cornerstones of Care.

Our presence will continue to focus on our values, including diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are grateful to our Foundation Board as well as the Health Forward Foundation, who cumulatively provided \$125,000 in grant support in the continuation of our WIDE expansion in 2023.

Thanks to our hard work last year, we are well-positioned to continue to evolve in our purpose, people, and presence throughout 2023.

Sincerely,

Merideth Rose
President and Chief Executive Officer



Family Preservation Team Addresses Truancy by Focusing on Parenting

When Cornerstones of Care received the referral for Aubrey's case, it was because of truancy, or repeated unexcused absences from school. The Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) had custody of Nik, Aubrey's teenage child, but Nik was able to continue to live at home. Like many custody cases that come to Cornerstones of Care, the situation with Aubrey was much more complex than it appeared on the surface.

"When you do assessments with the family and get to know them, you start to see the other issues pop up," said Kim Wells, Family Support Worker. Kim worked closely with Kristie Groff, Case Manager, to manage Aubrey's case.

Aubrey welcomed the Cornerstones of Care team members into her home and went through the motions of creating the case plan. She expressed her desire to change her lifestyle, limit her drug use, and modify her parenting, but her actions failed to reflect her words.

At the time, Nik was wrestling with whether they were transgender and suffered from ongoing mental health challenges brought on by the sudden death of their father eight months earlier.

"I remember Nik telling me, 'I was daddy's little girl — until I wasn't,'" said Kim. "He helped her to feel accepted and loved no matter what."

Although Aubrey was very supportive of Nik, her own mental health challenges prevented her from providing the parental support that Nik needed.

"Nik had been removed from Aubrey's care when she was very young," explained Kim. "Mom was always under the sense of guilt that if I don't do what Nik wants or needs, then I might lose her again."

Because of this traumatic past, Aubrey struggled greatly with being more than just a friend to Nik and saw herself as the "cool" mom. She didn't know

how to tap into her strength as a parent and support, guide, and discipline her child as needed.

Kim and Kristie also learned that Aubrey had dropped out of high school as a teen and got her GED later in life. Because she never completed high school, Aubrey struggled to recognize how vital school was for Nik, especially the social community and support it offered.

For several months, Kim and Kristie worked closely with Aubrey to empower her as a parent and demonstrate the maternal behaviors required of her. The case dragged on for over a year, and there were times when the hope for a turnaround with Aubrey began to wane.

During the latter part of the second referral from DCF, something clicked with Aubrey, and the real transformation began to occur. She began to recognize the importance of Nik's education and mental health services and started demonstrating the parenting style the team had emulated for her. Aubrey's drug test results began to show negative, and her relationship with Nik's school improved. As a result of these changes, Aubrey's mental health began to stabilize, she kept the home cleaner, and she found it easier to recognize and draw on her strengths as a mother.

"I think she finally felt permission to parent," said Kim. As parents of adult children, Kim and Kristie had taken the time to sit and talk with Aubrey about parenting day after day, listening to her and validating her fears and feelings. Over time, this type of care and support made all the difference for Aubrey.

Nik's mental health also began to improve, and Nik started using she/her pronouns again and chose to reclaim their given name, "Frankie." Nik started taking GED classes and made plans to move on to college classes when she finished. She also started working at Subway and hasn't missed a day of work yet.

Best of all, Aubrey and Nik's relationship improved dramatically and better reflects a more balanced, healthy mother-daughter relationship.

"She is focused on herself, finding out who she is and what she wants to be when she grows up," said Aubrey. "My daughter has no idea how much she inspires me to be my best self."

For Aubrey to succeed, it took consistent care and encouragement from the Cornerstones of Care team.

During home visits, Aubrey mentioned several times that she did not realize she had been trying to be Nik's friend instead of her mother. She joked that she needed someone to show her how to be a mother by "being a mother" to her.

During this transition, Aubrey was offered a job at an assisted living facility. She re-activated her Certified Nurse Aide credential and is taking classes to get it reinstated. After that, she will be the dietary manager at the assisted living facility. Because of Aubrey's previous work experience, the assisted living facility company is willing to pay for Aubrey to become a Certified Dietary Manager.

In October 2022, Nik turned 18, and the case officially closed. However, Aubrey still regularly reaches out to the Cornerstones of Care team to update them on their successes:

"Thank you for helping me remember that I'm a strong woman who deserves to love herself and live her best life," wrote Aubrey in a recent update. "Thank you for helping me with Nik and for helping Nik. Thank you for helping us remember that it's okay to not be okay. Thank you for helping us succeed!" ■

"Thank you for helping us remember that it's okay to not be okay. Thank you for helping us succeed!"

—Aubrey



Survey Results Indicate Strong Future for Ozanam Campus Day Treatment School

Welcoming, Respectful, Warm, Transparent, and Inspiring.

These are just some of the words that parents and family members used to describe the Ozanam Campus Day Treatment School in an end-of-year survey.

Another data set highlighted a significant decline in situations requiring discipline at the school, from 175 in the first semester of 2022 to just 47 discipline events in early 2023.

These impressive results speak to years of effort by teachers and staff committed to the progress and well-being of each student — an effort championed by Jill Rush, Director of Education at the Day Treatment School.

“I am really proud because this is what we’ve been focused on,” said Jill, now in her third year in this role. “We focused on building trust with our kids by creating a predictable and safe environment. That survey data affirms that all the time we’ve spent and all the repetition of these same principles and ideas has worked with our stakeholders and has made a difference for our students.”

The Day Treatment School provides individualized curriculum, small class sizes, and therapeutic services for high school students with unique behavioral or mental health challenges who have not found success in their home school districts. There are currently about 45 students from a variety of school districts in Kansas and Missouri that attend.





“So many kids come to us in full fight mode and find a person that they can trust. In those tough moments, that’s been the game changer for them.”

Jill Rush, Director of Education at the Day Treatment School

The main goal of the Day Treatment School is to help students develop coping skills and learning strategies so that they can transition back to their home district.

“If they can function in a school setting and not be a danger to themselves or others, then they will usually start a transition,” said Jill.

However, the circumstances for each student vary widely, and their individual goals for success may look different. For some students, the goal is to graduate from the Day Treatment School. In December 2022, four students donned caps and gowns and received their high school diplomas from Jill.

For students like Kayla*, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly complicated progress in school.

“We came back in person, and she couldn’t be alone with anyone but me,” said Jill. “She hit people; she bit people; she threw things at people. She had to remain virtual for a significant amount of time.”

Over the next few years, Kayla started to improve and began coming to school for one hour a day, building up her capacity a little bit at a time.

“Now, she’s thriving and is a leader in her class. She’s amazing,” said Jill. “So many kids come to us in full fight mode and find a person that they can trust. In those tough moments, that’s been the game changer for them.”

Behind the scenes, Jill works hard to create opportunities for team members to be vulnerable, recognize their hard work, and communicate their challenges and needs with one another. The team is not immune to turnover due to life changes and stress, but they are intentional about building processes and routines that reinforce their vision for success and can withstand the shift in personnel.

Each morning starts with a team-wide Zoom call where teachers and staff connect and share about what will happen that day, especially regarding potential trouble spots with students.

At the end of the day, if there were any incidents, the team gathers for a debrief.

“We meet, talk about what happened, get input, and decide consequences as a team,” said Jill. At first, the debriefs were only required for team members involved with the incident, but soon, everyone decided to be involved.

According to Jill, it is touchpoints like this that make a big difference for team members and the overall culture at the Day Treatment School.

“They make it so everything is out in the open,” said Jill. “Everyone has their opportunity to give feedback and get their opportunity to be heard.” ■

**Name changed to protect privacy*

FFT Helps a Family Find Motivation to Resolve Conflicts

When 17-year-old Pete and his family entered Functional Family Therapy (FFT), they were tired, frustrated, and doubted that anyone could help them resolve their issues.

Pete had already been through several alcohol addiction treatment programs. His stepmother was frustrated with what was happening, but her attempts to change things only inflamed the situation. Pete's dad was trying to keep the peace, yet things had become physical between him and his son.

Ben, their therapist, began his sessions with the family by building on what they already learned from prior treatment. He wanted them to use those skills more effectively and engaged with FFT's premise to create motivation before seeking change-seeking intervention.

Ben collaborated with the family to help them understand their relationship patterns, including the good intentions behind actions that contributed to their ongoing conflicts. Ben kept a balanced alliance with each family member by not taking sides and ensuring that everyone's voice was heard during the sessions. He sought to generate a sense of hope within the treatment-weary family.

Ben also sought to reduce blaming and reframe negative thought patterns. Through the initial weekly sessions, the stepmother was better able to understand her stepson's addiction and how she might respond more effectively. Pete learned to articulate the things that were upsetting him and making him anxious, including his connection to his addicted mother. Pete's dad learned how his attempts to be a buffer contributed to ongoing problems in the family.

Although Pete was not ready to quit alcohol, he was interested in skillfully managing his life and relationships. Once family members better understood their roles and felt a sense of hope, Ben worked with them to change core behaviors. The family practiced reflective listening and learned how to use "I messages."

Pete was able to use those skills, with therapist coaching, to express his feelings towards his stepmother. Not only were issues discussed, which brought some relief, but also conflict resolution occurred as family members expressed and heard each other's issues. Ben gave them 'homework' to practice skills between sessions. When Pete's girlfriend brought a dramatic issue to the family, they were able to use their new skills to resolve the conflict in between sessions. The family was able to identify that "I feel-messages" were very useful to them.

By the time the family reached the end of their FFT sessions with Ben, they were motivated to continue their progress and partner with other treatment providers. Pete had reduced alcohol use by substituting healthier behaviors. He also started working, which empowered him to reduce his dependence on alcohol. ■



Our Impact in 2022

Foster Care and Adoption

- 1481 respite, relative, foster, medical foster, and treatment foster care homes **partnered with us**.
- 1334 youth in foster care **received case management**.
- 126 children were **safely reunited** with their families.
- 122 children **found forever homes** through adoption.

Youth and Family Support

- 1727 individuals received **outpatient counseling**.
- 967 families received services to **safely stay together**.
- 127 young adults **gained independence** in our Pathways program.
- 90 youth received intensive **on-campus living treatment**.
- 1454 family members **received treatment** at Homeroom Health.

Education and Community Trainings

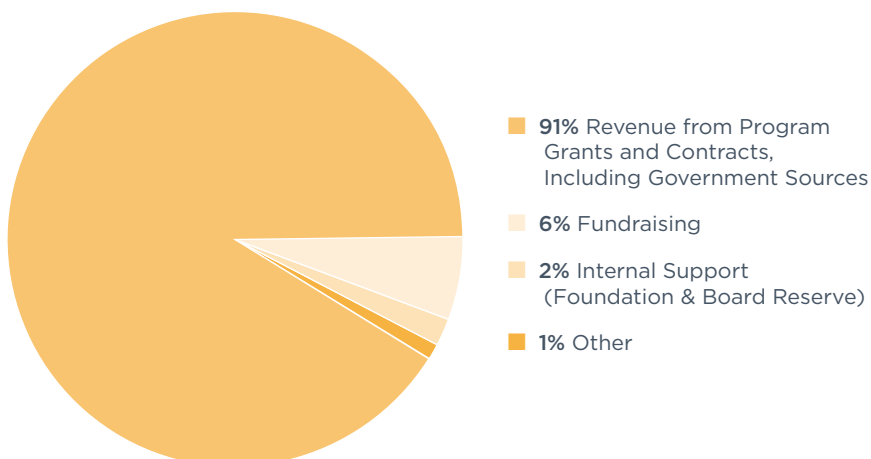
- **Provided training** to 879 participants.
- 275 youth **learned employable skills** in Build Trybe.
- 300 schools and 4,000 educators and parents **partnered** with our BIST team.
- 165 students **received an education** on our campuses.
- 9 resilient seniors **graduated** from our high schools.

Our Financials

Our highest priority is to ensure that children and families impacted by trauma have timely access to services and support whenever they request it — even during the most difficult economic times. The surest way to do that is to be conscientious stewards of our financial resources.

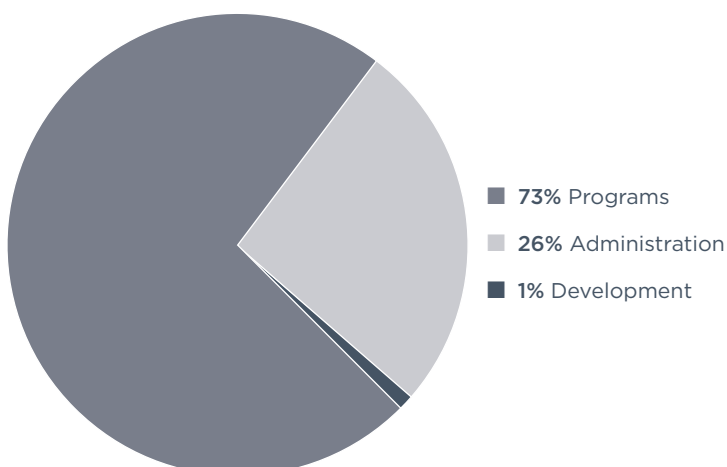
WHO PAYS OUR BILLS?

Source: 2022 Approved Budget



WHERE THE MONEY GOES

Source: 2022 Audit





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Click below to learn more about:



cornerstonesofcare.org ■ 1-844-824-8200

