



Advocates *for* Children

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



growing
HOPE
OUT OF HURT



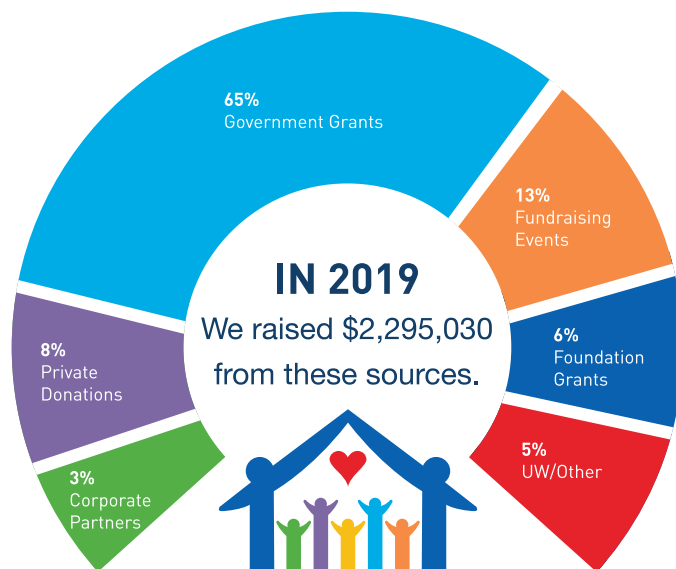
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ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

is a non-profit organization committed to the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. Through our umbrella of programs, we strive to one day help create a world where all children are respected and loved, happy and thriving.

2019 marked the first full year under the direction of new board and organizational leadership. The team at Advocates set a goal for enhanced reporting on many levels of the organization including programming. As a result we are proud to announce that in 2019 we served 6723 children and 2118 adults through our comprehensive program offerings.





growing
HOPE
OUT OF HURT



FROM THE PRESIDENT/CEO

2019 at Advocates brought us our theme:

Growing Hope out of Hurt. Our Board and Senior Leadership team collaborated to identify the heart of our services; we decided that Hope is central to everything we do at Advocates. Hope is defined as the feeling that what we want can be had or that events will turn out for the best. Many of our clients have lost all hope when we first encounter them. Through our team of professional and dedicated staff and our individualized client services, Hope is restored and a vision for the future is cast. 2019 also brought our first new program in 6 years- RISE (Resiliency, Independence, Self-sufficiency, and Empowerment). This program, designed specifically for youth experiencing homelessness between the ages of 18 and 24, ensures that they have a strong foundation to build upon and become self-sufficient by providing housing, essential services, and individualized programming. As we look forward to

2020, we are excited about launching a new Strategic Plan filled with hope for the future at Advocates. We also look forward to achieving organization excellence by obtaining national accreditation through the Council on Accreditation. Lastly, we look forward to your continued support in 2020, as your support in 2019 provided all of us here at Advocates with Hope.

- Rachel Castillo



CURRENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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CHILDREN'S
ADVOCACY CENTER



CASA
COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES

Creating a safe place for children and
their families *when they need it most.*



By becoming a CASA volunteer you can
change the course of a child's life.



CAC provides a coordination of services to reduce trauma for children who have made allegations of sexual or severe physical abuse. The CAC serves children ages three to 18 who are referred by law enforcement agencies or the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) if there are allegations of abuse. At the CAC, children are interviewed by highly trained professionals in a child-friendly setting at a single event that is overseen and followed up by a Multi-Disciplinary Team. We ensure that the interview is developmentally appropriate and can be used for evidentiary purposes. Since our opening in 2008, we have helped over 1600 children while reducing trauma during the reporting process. The CAC also provides preventive programs to educate the non-offending caregivers and the community as a whole on ways to treat child abuse and prevent it from occurring in the first place.

In 2019, the CAC served 331 children who sat bravely in an interview room to tell their story of abuse and neglect.

CASA advocates for our young clients inside and outside of the courtroom. The role of local CASA programs is to recruit, train, and support volunteers in their work with abused children. Our trained volunteers are appointed by Juvenile Court Judges to speak up for the needs of children involved in court proceedings. CASA Volunteers advocate for children's safety, permanence, and well-being based on their independent evaluation of the child and the family situation. In 2019, CASA effectively reduced re-entry into the foster care system by giving a voice to the child victims during proceedings. Advocates for Children trains and manages CASA volunteers who fight for and protect children's right to be safe and to grow up in the safe embrace of a loving family. With the support of our community, we have helped families with food, clothing, furniture, toys, and much more.

In 2019, 74 CASA volunteers donated 6,203 hours to advocate for 271 children.



Residential program for abused, neglected and runaway youth.

Parents as Teachers
Every child deserves a great start!



Our children's shelter offers a safe, nurturing place for children have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. Flowering Branch Children's Shelter (FBCS) focuses on permanency, education, and the development of independent living skills for our residents. Though our children often come from challenging backgrounds, in the past year we witnessed the great gift of two of our children transitioning to their new adoptive family just in time for Christmas! In 2019, FBCS received generous donations from the Betty and Davis Fitzgerald Foundation, Help for Children, the Mary Allen Lindsey Branan Foundation, the Cobb EMC Community Foundation, the Virgil P. Warren Foundation, and the Cartersville Service League to support services for the children we serve. We were also recipients of Extra Wish funding through the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta to replace household items at our shelter. We are very grateful to our donors and community partners who help us ensure that children victims of abuse and neglect have a safe place to call home.

In 2019, our shelter was home for 42 children who were given a safe place to sleep, medical care, and loving support. In addition, we provided outreach to 4,669 youth through our Safe Place and Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs.

Hope in Your Home (HIYH) is an individualized parenting program reaching children and families at risk of experiencing child maltreatment. HIYH utilizes both the Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) and Parents as Teachers (PAT) curricula, and works in conjunction with First Steps, a program that provides support, parenting information, and referrals to new mothers at our local hospitals. In the past year, Hope in Your Home served a single mother of 5 who struggled with substance abuse and had been incarcerated due to her drug habit. When she enrolled in HIYH, two of her children were in foster care. By the end of the program, she had regained custody of her children and was very enthusiastic about implementing new parenting strategies to build a long-lasting bond with them. Our program provides information and referral services as needed, transportation assistance, and support group meetings for each participant family. We deliver supportive services after program completion to ensure that families meet their basic needs and form a continuum of support.

HIYH served 216 adults and 387 children from 192 households in 2019. Our staff made 278 referrals to community resources and our First Steps program conducted 678 visits to new mothers at the local hospitals.



Helping children heal
from painful family transitions.



Rainbows is a national program dedicated to helping children heal from painful family transitions, including separation, divorce, death, illness, and military deployment. The program is a weekly peer support group with caring adults that act as guides for grieving children. Rainbows provides training to facilitators who help children navigate their emotions relating to painful family transitions and teach them skills for constructively coping with grief. We seek to alleviate depression and anxiety while improving communication within families to reduce emotional pain and suffering. We also aim to minimize the likelihood of destructive behavior through anger management and problem-solving skills. Rainbows currently conducts grief counseling sessions for children enrolled in grades K-12 in 14 schools within the Bartow County and Cartersville City school systems.

During the 2018-2019 school year, Rainbows helped 122 children in 14 different schools through grief support sessions.



Independent housing program
for youth ages 18-24



RISE - YOUTH INDEPENDENT HOUSING PROGRAM
RISE serves youth living in homelessness in six of the eleven counties that Advocates for Children serves across northwest Georgia. Our program helps youth between the ages of 18 to 24 years old obtain and maintain housing, become self-sufficient, and grow into independent and successful adults. We use both case management and medium-term assistance to guide youth through their transition into permanent housing. We launched our program in Fall 2019 thanks to federal funding awarded to Advocates for Children and with the help of a grant from the Wells Fargo Foundation. By identifying the appropriate housing option and the supportive services needed for the youth served, our RISE program ensures that housing is retained, and homelessness prevented in the long-term.

RISE began providing services to homeless youth in the last trimester of 2019. In just four months, our program interviewed 10 youth and placed 6 of them into permanent housing, ensuring 126 safe nights of rest.



Advocates *for* Children

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