

2017 Annual Report


BLUE SKY BRIDGE
Child & Family Advocacy Center



At Blue Sky Bridge, we facilitate a collaborative approach to child abuse investigations while providing child victims and their families with support in a safe and child-focused environment. We strive to make the community safer for all children and families through intervention, education and advocacy.

Thank you for your support!



DEAR FRIEND OF BLUE SKY BRIDGE,

Thank you for joining us in our mission to fight child abuse. Your extraordinary support allowed us to accomplish so much this past year, most notably, helping to make the vision of our expansion project a reality.

Today we have doubled our capacity for forensic interviews and boast two new programs: a Medical Program for on-site pediatric exams and a Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) Program. Children and families no longer need to wait to receive the care they deserve and will have all of the services they need in one location.

We also made enormous strides in our School-based Education Program for 3rd-grade children, teachers, and parents. The four thirty-minute class presentations emphasize touching rules and body safety rules, the difference between secrets and surprises, identifying trusted adults, and the "No, Go, Tell" plan. This past school year we had 50% growth in this program, serving a record of 32 schools and a total of 1,988 students. The demand for this program only continues to grow.

All of our programs are offered free of cost because we feel strongly that victims and their families who are in crisis should not have to pay for crimes committed against them.

We are proud of the fact that when you support Blue Sky Bridge, you are supporting a solution to the epidemic of child abuse in our local community. What we do every day works, and we have you to thank.

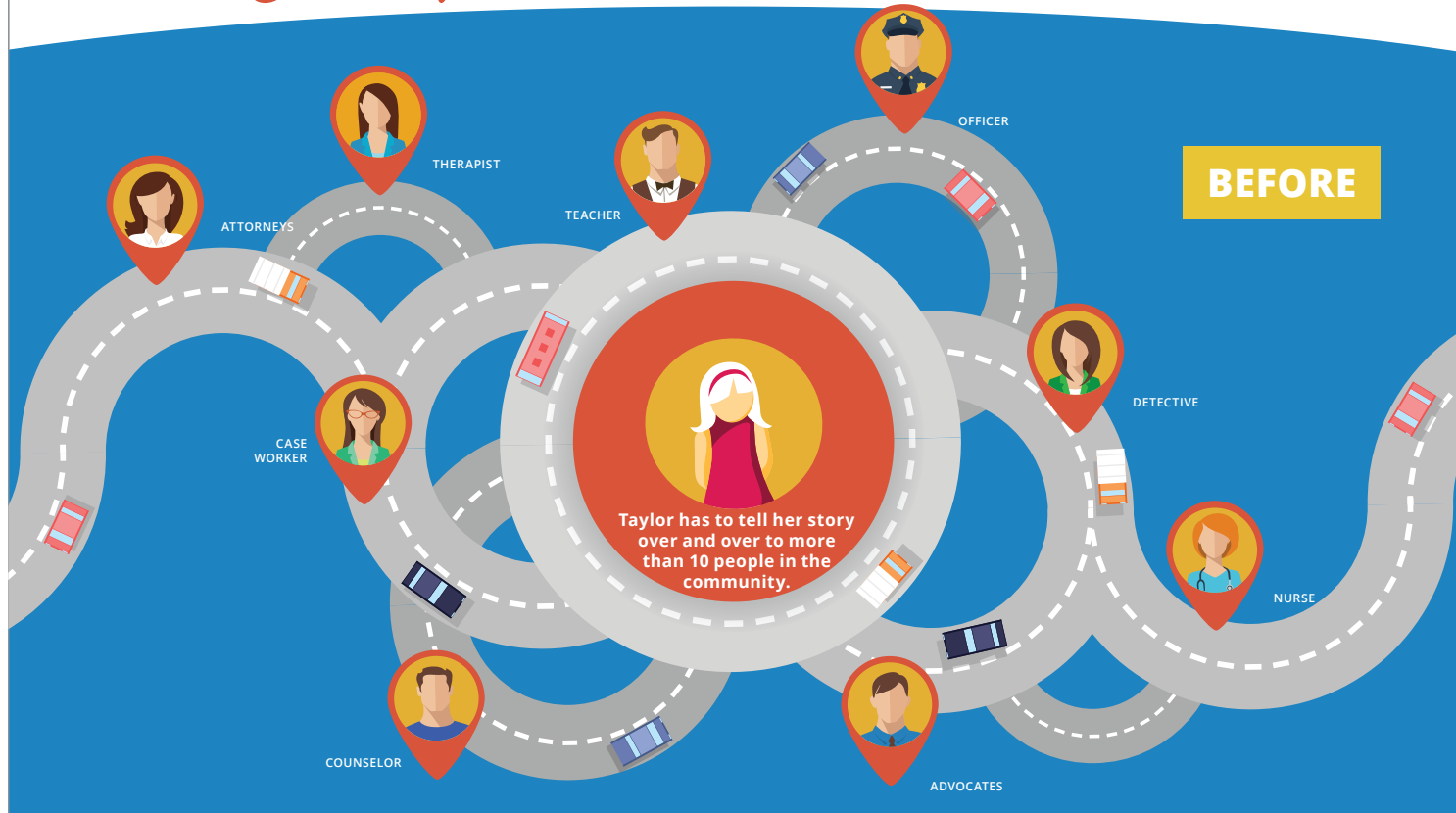
We hope that our 2017 Annual Report will prove that every dollar contributed brought us closer to the vision that we all share together: a vision where every child can experience the childhood they were meant to – a childhood free from abuse.

Thank you.

Warm Regards,

 **Gina Maione Earles**
Executive Director

A place of healing and justice



It used to be that a child, let's call her Taylor, would have to tell her story of abuse over and over to potentially more than a dozen school officials, police officers, doctors, attorneys and social workers.

TODAY



With help from Blue Sky Bridge, Taylor can tell her story **one time** to someone who really understands, in **one place, our place**.

Today, Taylor and her family are able to come to **one place, our place**. Here they receive the help and support they need. Taylor can tell her story while law enforcement and a child protection caseworker listen in another room. And Taylor's family can meet with an advocate to help them understand the process and begin the healing journey. Taylor can also benefit from onsite medical and therapy services. **One place. Our place.**

We start by giving kids a voice...

By providing a centrally-located, child-focused facility and a coordinated response by all investigative agencies, Blue Sky Bridge is proactive in its approach to helping families during child abuse investigations. We provide immediate intervention, forensic interviews, crisis intervention counseling, family support, and follow-up services to child victims and non-offending family members.

FORENSIC INTERVIEW The core of our Child Advocacy Program is our Forensic Interview. The focus is on the truth. The interview is child-lead and conducted in a way to minimize suggestibility and trauma. At Blue Sky Bridge, Forensic Interviews are observed live by Law Enforcement and/or a case worker from the Department of Housing and Human Services. The interview is also recorded and a copy is given to Law Enforcement to be submitted as evidence in the investigation.

FAMILY SUPPORT In addition to supporting the child, we also offer Family Support. We work with non-offending caregivers by providing crisis intervention counseling and follow-up services. As an additional support to families, Blue Sky Bridge offers a free, 6-week psychoeducational support group for non-offending parents and caregivers of child survivors of sexual abuse.


CRISIS INTERVENTION Professional advocates are available at Blue Sky Bridge to answer any questions from caregivers, doctors, teachers, or anyone who may have a concern about a child. After assessing a caller's needs, our advocates help the caller make a report to law enforcement or human services, as well as provide additional support and referrals if needed. All calls are completely confidential.




"Our daughter loved coming to Blue Sky Bridge. When it came time to leave, she didn't want to go. She was so happy talking with your staff." - Mom of a 5 year old who visited Blue Sky Bridge to tell her story.

Power in prevention...

Blue Sky Bridge believes that education is a tool for preventing and breaking the cycle of abuse. In addition to serving the children who enter the abuse investigation process, we are committed to keeping all kids safe. Both our School-Based Prevention Education and Stewards of Children Training Programs help ensure that kids know they are the boss of their own bodies and that they, and the adults around them, know where to turn for help.

 **SCHOOL-BASED EDUCATION** Our School-based Education Program utilizes a three-tiered holistic approach that includes a presentation with tips and resources for parents, training for school personnel, and a program for 3rd grade children consisting of four thirty-minute class presentations. The class presentations are age appropriate with an emphasis on touching rules and body safety rules, the difference between secrets and surprises, identifying trusted adults, and the “No, Go, Tell” plan.

 **STEWARDS OF CHILDREN** Stewards of Children is an evidence-informed prevention solution that increases knowledge, improves attitudes, and positively changes adults’ child-protective behaviors over the long-term. This practical training includes compelling video of survivors and experts in the field, interactive workbook activity, and group discussion. It is a two-hour training that goes beyond awareness and equips its participants with skills and tools.

“Blue Sky Bridge provides a developmentally appropriate, research-based teaching program for students. It is one of the best, most proactive things we can provide our children in terms of keeping them safe.” - Josh Baldner, Principal, Mesa Elementary



Trauma Focused Therapy...

Blue Sky Bridge is excited to announce the launch of our Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) Program, a new program initiative that resulted from our expansion project.

The program is available for children ages 5 to 17. A child or teen must have received a Forensic Interview following a traumatic event or series of events in order to be eligible for this program. Families will have access to therapy regardless of their ability to pay.

Specific components of the treatment model are psychoeducation, emotional regulation, correcting negative beliefs, trauma narrative, and positive parenting. Benefits include improved personal safety skills, better relationships, relaxation techniques, healthy boundaries, improved self-management, and more. Our aim is to:

- 1 Reduce trauma symptoms
- 2 Strengthen the parent-child relationship
- 3 Support the entire family in moving forward

Medical Treatment Program

Another program that resulted from our expansion project is our Medical Treatment Program. This new program offers children who come to Blue Sky Bridge specialized medical support.

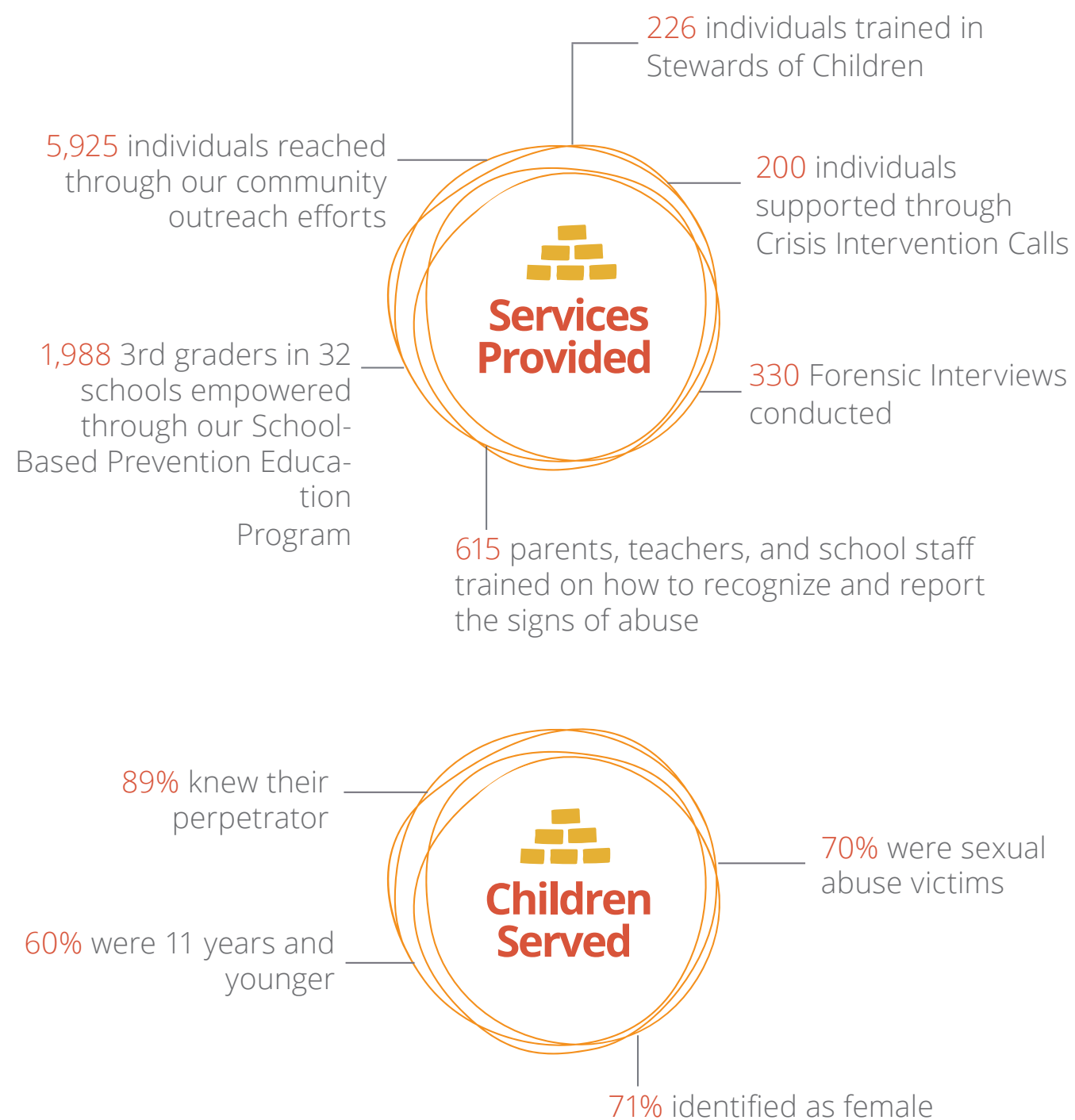
The exam will accomplish **three critical things**:

- 1 Determine whether the child needs further medical attention
- 2 Provide an opportunity to collect evidence if possible
- 3 Give assurance to children that nothing is wrong with them



Exams are performed onsite by specially qualified and trained nurses, and ensure that every child that comes through our doors has the opportunity to get this offering, completely free of charge.

A year in review...



**Statistics based on 2016 calendar year and 2016-2017 academic year.*

Extending the Bridge of Healing & Justice



Our expansion
will give more than
700
children and family
members increased
access to support and
justice each year.

The bridge to new horizons...

2016 was a big year as Blue Sky Bridge announced a plan to expand services to Boulder County's children. Our original facility has been renovated and an entirely new facility was built on the adjacent empty lot. The two buildings are connected by an indoor walkway. A carefully planned capital campaign has to date raised close to \$1.5 million to complete the project.

With more than 2 times the space, we now provide a full spectrum of services with increased privacy and comfort for children and their families. In addition, we offer new program initiatives such as trauma-focused therapy and a medical room so that children can receive on-site medical exams and specialized medical staff can gather forensic evidence in a timely and cohesive way.

The people who power Blue Sky Bridge

Staff

Gina Maione Earles, Executive Director

Michelle Amato
Katie Ashburner
Allison Breed
Karen Daly
Cliff Deffke
Gretchen Fair
Alea Fallon
Robin Friesen-Holwell

Claudia Gilbert
Kim Grimm
Faith Motter
Christine Springer
Debbie Stewart
Carol Vidaurre
Sarah Vincent
Trish Wood

Board of Directors

Catrina Weigel, Chair
Brooke Davison, Vice Chair
Paige Norton, Treasurer
Detective Mark Deaton, Secretary
Andrew Bush
Charlotte Genevier
Bing Howenstein

Carey Kerschner
Amy Larson
Andria Lewis
Michael McCarthy
Cheryl McConnell
Dave Rich
Jonathan Schoenberg

"Blue Sky Bridge is an incredible place. I couldn't do what I do at the DA's Office if it wasn't for them."

– Catrina Weigel, Board Chair, Deputy District Attorney

"Whether we all know it or not, our lives have been impacted by child sexual abuse. 2 new children are abused in Boulder County every day, and when a child needs help – they go to Blue Sky Bridge. There is no other place. Without Blue Sky Bridge, abused children in our community would suffer."

– Brooke Davison, Vice Chair


Blue Sky
Bridge Staff





Mighty Marion

In November 2016, we welcomed a new addition, Marion, to our team. Marion is a two-year-old female, Golden Labrador. Her role working at Blue Sky Bridge is to help reduce stress and anxiety for children, families, staff, and agency partners visiting the organization. The most important quality that Marion brings is the unconditional love that she provides to children and families in what can often be very traumatic circumstances.

Marion can greet children and families when they first arrive, or she can be used during therapy sessions or Forensic Interviews where she can be a calming presence for children coming to Blue Sky Bridge to tell their story of abuse.

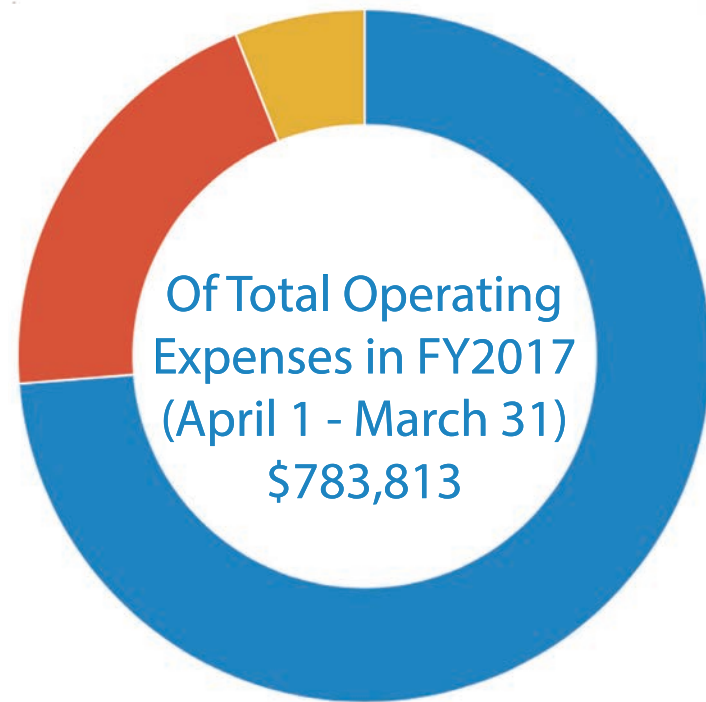


“Blue Sky Bridge is a trail blazing entity.
They set an example that is looked at across
the country.”

-Stan Garnett,
District Attorney

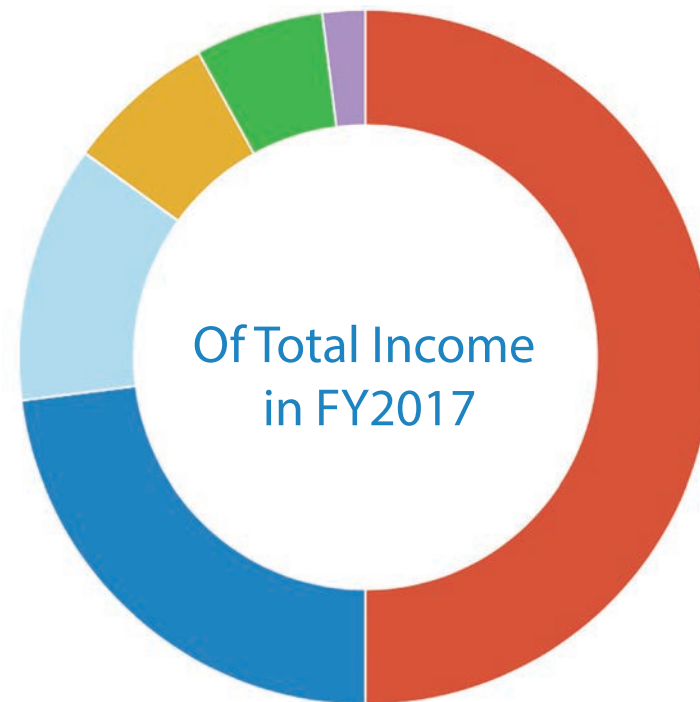


Financials



● Programs 73% ● Fundraising 20%

● G&A 6%

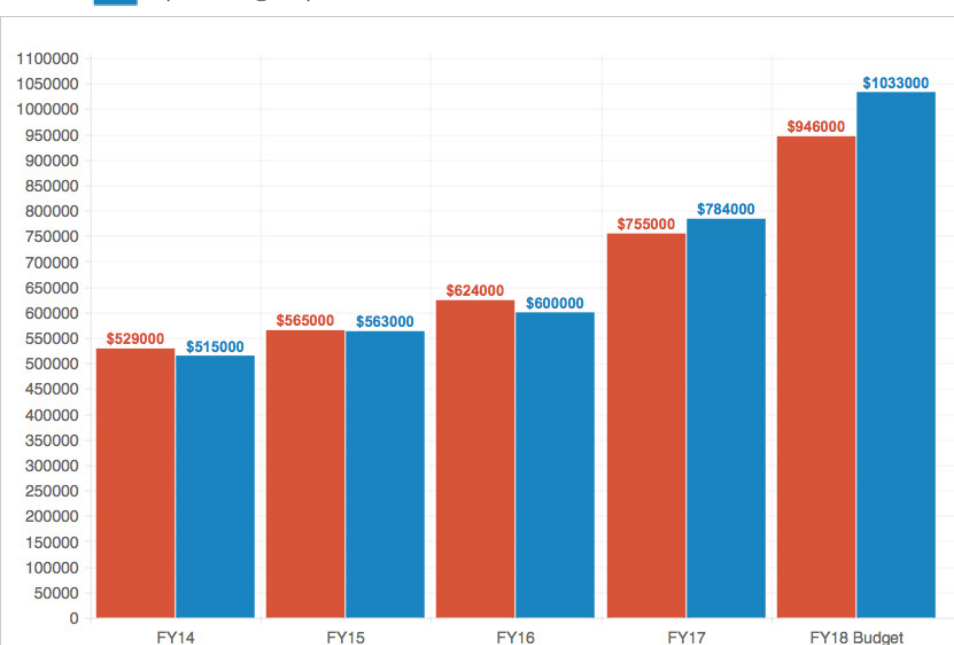


● Government 50% ● Events & Raffles 23%

● Individuals 12% ● Foundations 7%

Income vs Expense

■ Operating Income
■ Operating Expense



The past few years have been a period of tremendous growth for Blue Sky Bridge. Our capital fundraising efforts started in 2015, with a goal of raising \$1,500,000. As of 3/31/17, we had \$50,500 remaining to meet this goal. We anticipate completing our capital campaign this year.

During this growth period, we are investing operating reserves to launch new programs. Over the next year, we will be securing new sources of funding to fill the gaps and achieve new levels of community impact.

At the fiscal year end, operating reserves were approximately \$485,000, equivalent to six months of operating expenses.

Your dollars at work

- \$130 provides
1 family with critical support services during a child abuse investigation.
- \$350 provides
8 families with support group services to help non-offending caregivers process their child's abuse.
- \$660 provides
6 trainings to a group of community members on child abuse.
- \$1,200 provides
1 week of forensic interviews to victims of child abuse.
- \$2,000 provides
1 child and their family with trauma-focused therapy.
- \$5,000 provides
Boulder County with trained Family Support Advocates to answer over 200 crisis calls for a year.
- \$10,000 provides
Sexual abuse prevention education to 7 third-grade classrooms.

Your generosity enables us to sustain and grow these vital programs. You are part of the solution to ending child abuse.

Thank you!





Blue Sky Bridge
P.O. Box 19122
Boulder, CO 80308-2122
(303) 444-1388
blueskybridge.org