

Vision:

*In the eyes of the community,
Families First will be synonymous
with integrity, exemplary service,
and a compassionate approach.*

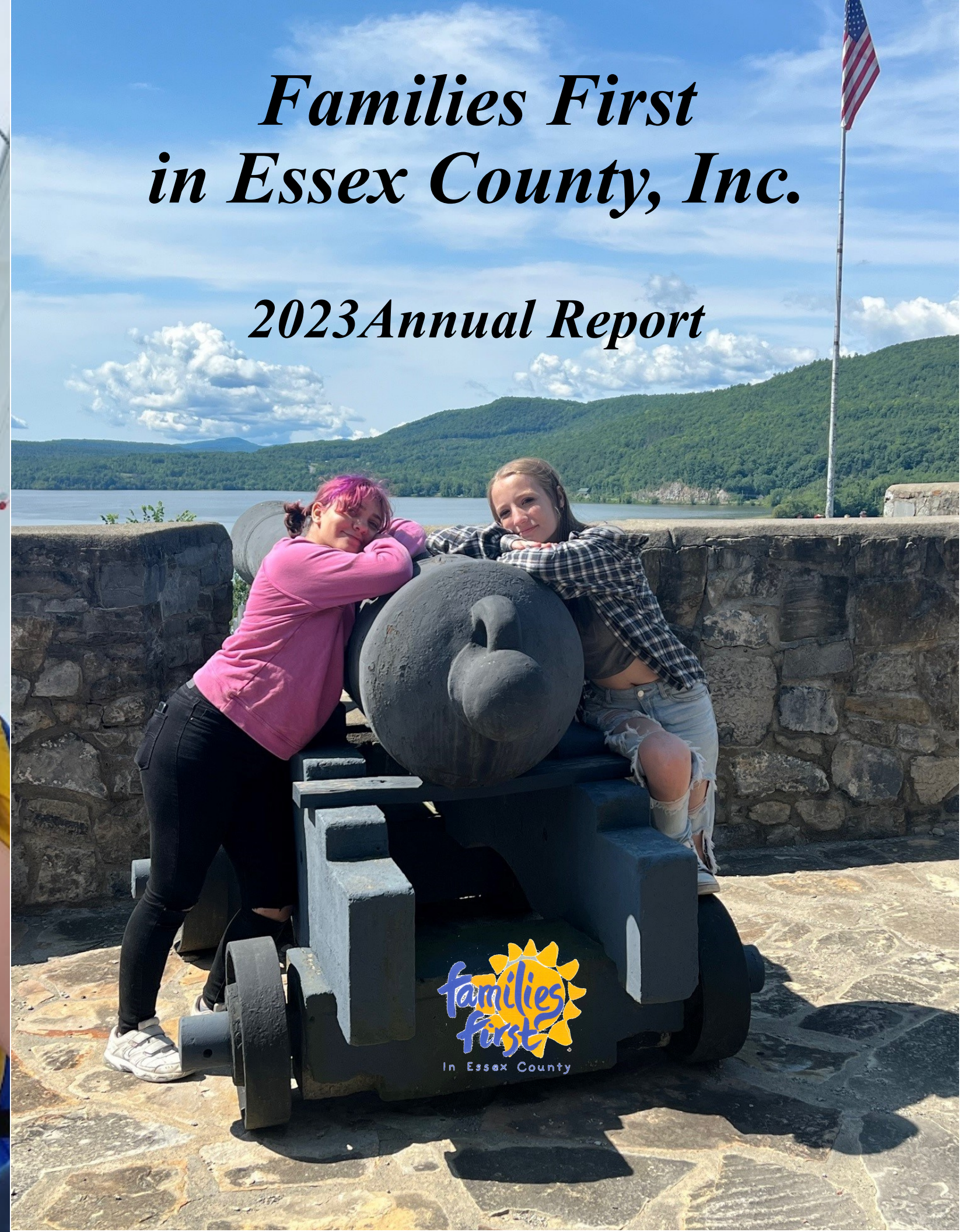
*In the eyes of families,
Families First will be a trusted partner
offering hope and bolstering stamina
on parents' journeys toward improved
emotional/behavioral health
for their children.*



*Families First in Essex County, Inc.
PO Box 565, 196 Water St.,
Elizabethtown, NY 12932
* 518-873-9544 *
* www.familiesfirstessex.org **

Families First in Essex County, Inc.

2023 Annual Report



Dear Friends, Staff and Community Partners of Families First,

As Co-Chairs of the board of Families First it is truly a privilege to serve this organization.

We are delighted to share our annual report for the fiscal year ending 2023 on behalf of the Board of Directors of Families First in Essex County, Inc.

Despite financial challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, we navigated through with resilience. Utilizing reserve funds of \$200,000, from years of fundraising, we ensured uninterrupted operations, replenishing all funds by Fall 2023.

The final lifting of COVID restrictions in May 2023 marked a significant milestone, allowing us to resume recreational activities and reinstate our fundraising efforts, including the annual \$10,000 raffle. Additionally, the last round of COVID assistance funding, totaling \$217,741, was utilized for staff bonuses, building improvements, and technology upgrades.

In response to changing work dynamics, we repurposed office space for executive staff and optimized our basement to provide flexible workspaces. Measures to address flooding challenges were also implemented, including a leaf filter gutter system and a water-retaining wall.

The Board approved strategic initiatives such as NYS compliance changes, updates to our Personnel Policy & Procedure manual, and a tiered 401K match plan to incentivize employee engagement. Like much of the North Country, hiring and retaining qualified staff continues to be a big challenge.

We also transitioned to a new insurance broker and provider, adopted a modernized internal phone system, had a clean financial audit and approved a \$100,000 budget increase for 2024.

Our board saw the resignation of Ann Cammack and Bob Laba, but we welcomed the return of Winky Thomas.

We extend our gratitude to our staff, volunteers, donors, and partners for their unwavering support. Together, we continue to advocate for positive change and serve those in need.

Enclosed please find the annual report for further details and thank you for your ongoing partnership.

Warm regards,

Hillary Stransky and Malinda Bergamini-Chapman,
Board Co-Chairs



Board of Directors:

Officers:

Hillary Stransky: Co-Chair, Essex; Malinda Bergamini-Chapman: Co-Chair, Ticonderoga;
Sharon Cook: Treasurer, Essex; Karen Ashline: Secretary, Willsboro

Members:

Debra Cully: Ticonderoga; Jo Ann Husslein: Westport; Maureen Moynan: Willsboro;
Sue Reaser: Westport; Kip Thompson: Elizabethtown; Winky Thomas: Middlebury VT;
Ken White: Westport



In 2023, over 27 social, recreational and/or group events were held, please enjoy just a few pictures from those events!





Families First - Values:

All families have strengths that should be recognized and appreciated.

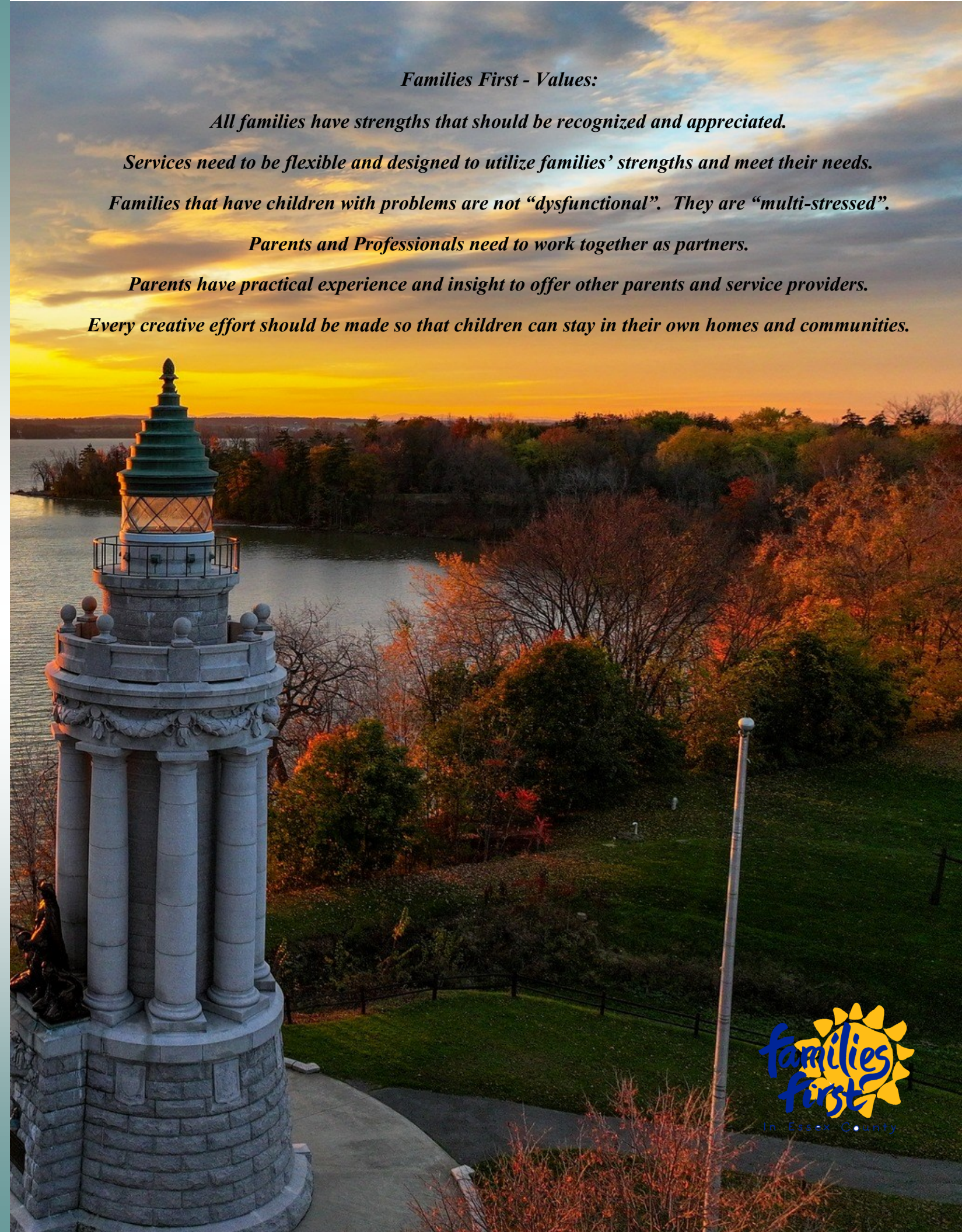
Services need to be flexible and designed to utilize families' strengths and meet their needs.

Families that have children with problems are not "dysfunctional". They are "multi-stressed".

Parents and Professionals need to work together as partners.

Parents have practical experience and insight to offer other parents and service providers.

Every creative effort should be made so that children can stay in their own homes and communities.



From the Chief Executive Officer –

In 2023, as we endeavored to restore a sense of normalcy following the conclusion of the Global Covid Pandemic, Essex County and surrounding areas faced challenges in staffing to meet the needs of youth and families. Despite hiring 11 new staff members throughout the year, we saw 10 departures by year's end. It became apparent that many individuals preferred the flexibility of remote work during the pandemic and were reluctant to return to in-person, community-based roles. Nevertheless, our existing staff rallied together, shouldering extra responsibilities and demonstrating remarkable dedication to compensate for the shortfall.

To support our team, we utilized remaining Covid relief funds (\$217,741 from NYS DOH ARPA funds) intended for workforce and infrastructure needs. These funds were allocated towards staff bonuses, upgrading laptop computers, and making necessary building modifications to ensure adequate space for providing services to our participants. (see pictures later in this report)

On a brighter note, 2023 saw four employees receive longevity awards, showcasing their unwavering commitment to our agency and the communities we serve. These individuals have contributed immensely, with milestones ranging from 5 to 30 years of service. (JoAnne Caswell, 30 years; Deborah Mitchell, 15 years; Tara Stockwell, 10 years and Lisa Sheehan, 5 years).

Despite our achievements, 2023 posed challenges, including flooding in our basement caused by severe rainstorms. To address this, we installed (2) leaf filter gutter systems and constructed a water-retaining wall, between our parking lot and the egress windows in the basement. Further observation is needed to determine their effectiveness.

For the first time in my 23-year tenure as Director at Families First, we faced significant revenue challenges. Our newest programs (CFTSS & HCBS) struggled after the conclusion of enhanced funds during Covid, coupled with inadequate rates to cover costs. However, through increased enrollments and the implementation of minimum production standards, we successfully navigated these hurdles, returning to profitability by mid-year. Our staff rose admirably to meet this challenge, surpassing the new production standards by year-end. Congratulations and thank you, to our three highest producers: Jim Jaquish, Shelby Delaire and Buffy Marcil.



Looking ahead to 2024, our commitment remains steadfast in delivering excellent services to youth and families. We will continue to collaborate with community agencies and engage with donors while fostering a positive work environment to attract and retain top talent. Our goal is to drive organizational growth and excellence in the years ahead.

JoAnne M. Caswell, CEO



Pictures of my new office. This is upstairs where the old conference room used to be. It is now the Executive Suite, with the offices of the CEO, COO and Chief Compliance/HR Officer.



During a torrential downpour, rain was even coming out of the gutters.



Building Renovations - 2023:

Basement Remodel –

Prior to the Covid Pandemic, all staff had either an office, desk or private space in the building to use and they came to the office regularly.

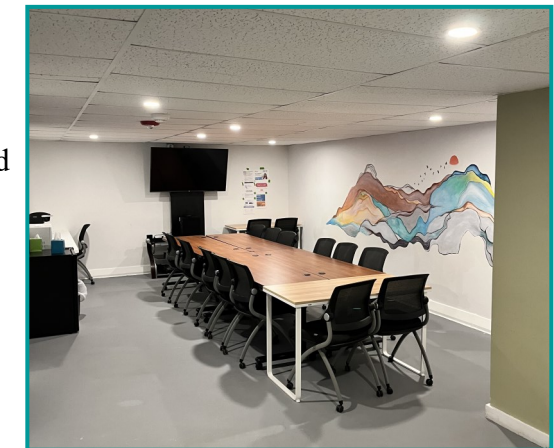
During Covid, most of our Staff began utilizing their homes as their office. For our Direct Care Staff, this proved to be very efficient - it saved time, travel and money. Currently only office-based and/or administrative staff come to the office routinely. All other staff, now officially are based out of their homes and no longer have office space in the building.

It became evident very quickly that staff would however need “space” to provide services to kids, hold meetings with other staff and/or families and have a place to land. We decided that a renovation of the basement would be necessary to accomplish these goals.

We created a large conference room for meetings, with a TV for zoom options. Artist/Staff member Kayleigh Wojewodziec, along with a few of her co-workers (Brian G., Janelle B., JoAnne R., Lisa S., and Liz L.) and numerous kids, ranging in age from 6 to 17 yrs. old, painted an amazing mural on one of the walls.

We created a play space for younger children, that is connected to a second conference room for meetings where parents and youth are involved.

And throughout the rest of the basement, a couple of quiet spaces for staff to use for calls or paperwork and a few smaller meeting rooms or spaces for groups.



The “Green Striped” Room, is a small meeting space for staff.



The Playroom



The “Blue Ombre” Room, is a bit more comfortable space for discussions.

Program Report: - (continued)

Looking Ahead

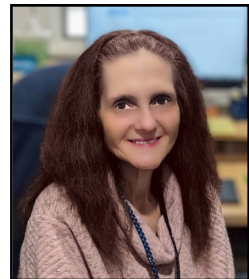
As we embark on the journey into 2024, we stand at the precipice of endless possibilities, poised to build upon the foundation laid in 2023 and chart a course toward even greater heights of impact and excellence. Plans for the upcoming year include expanding our Other Licensed Professional (OLP) services through strategic partnerships and further integrating trauma-informed care practices across all programs.

Additionally, ongoing participation in collaborative initiatives such as the Transition-Aged Youth group underscores our commitment to advocating for seamless transitions and comprehensive support for youth within our community. By leveraging our collective strengths, embracing innovation, and nurturing strategic partnerships, we are confident in our ability to navigate through uncertainty and emerge as trailblazers in the field of social services.

In conclusion, the year 2023 was characterized by resilience, innovation, and collective achievement. Despite facing unprecedented challenges, our organization emerged stronger and more united, guided by our unwavering commitment to serving our community with excellence. As we reflect on the accomplishments and challenges of the past year, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Board for their steadfast support, guidance, and unwavering commitment to our shared mission and to our Staff for their continued dedication to our clientele. Together, we have demonstrated the power of collaboration, compassion, and resilience in overcoming adversity and making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracey R. Serlock
Chief Operating Officer



A system utilizing a Trauma-Informed Care approach realizes the direct impact that trauma can have on access to services and responds by changing policies, procedures and practices to minimize potential barriers. A system utilizing a Trauma-Informed approach also fully integrates knowledge about trauma into all aspects of services and trains staff to recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma and thus avoid any possibility of re-traumatization.



Taylor Gohlke
Youth Peer Advocate
Families First in Essex County

Families First participated in an Advertising Campaign for “Careers in Essex County, NY”, sponsored by the BRIEF Coalition (Building Resilience in Essex Families), of which Families First is a member. Numerous Agencies created video’s, primarily highlighting careers in “peer” positions. Taylor Gohlke, a Youth Peer Advocate at Families First, was one of many peers to be featured (great job Taylor!). Youth can see all of the videos at www.resilientcareers.org



Our Mission:

In the hopes and dreams of parents we find our work - offering a hand in partnership to families who have children with emotional or behavioral challenges -

That self-doubt give way to uncovered strengths, despair be replaced with hope, and the once-diminishing dreams for their children’s success will blossom anew.



2023 Staff Retreat - Rulf's Orchard

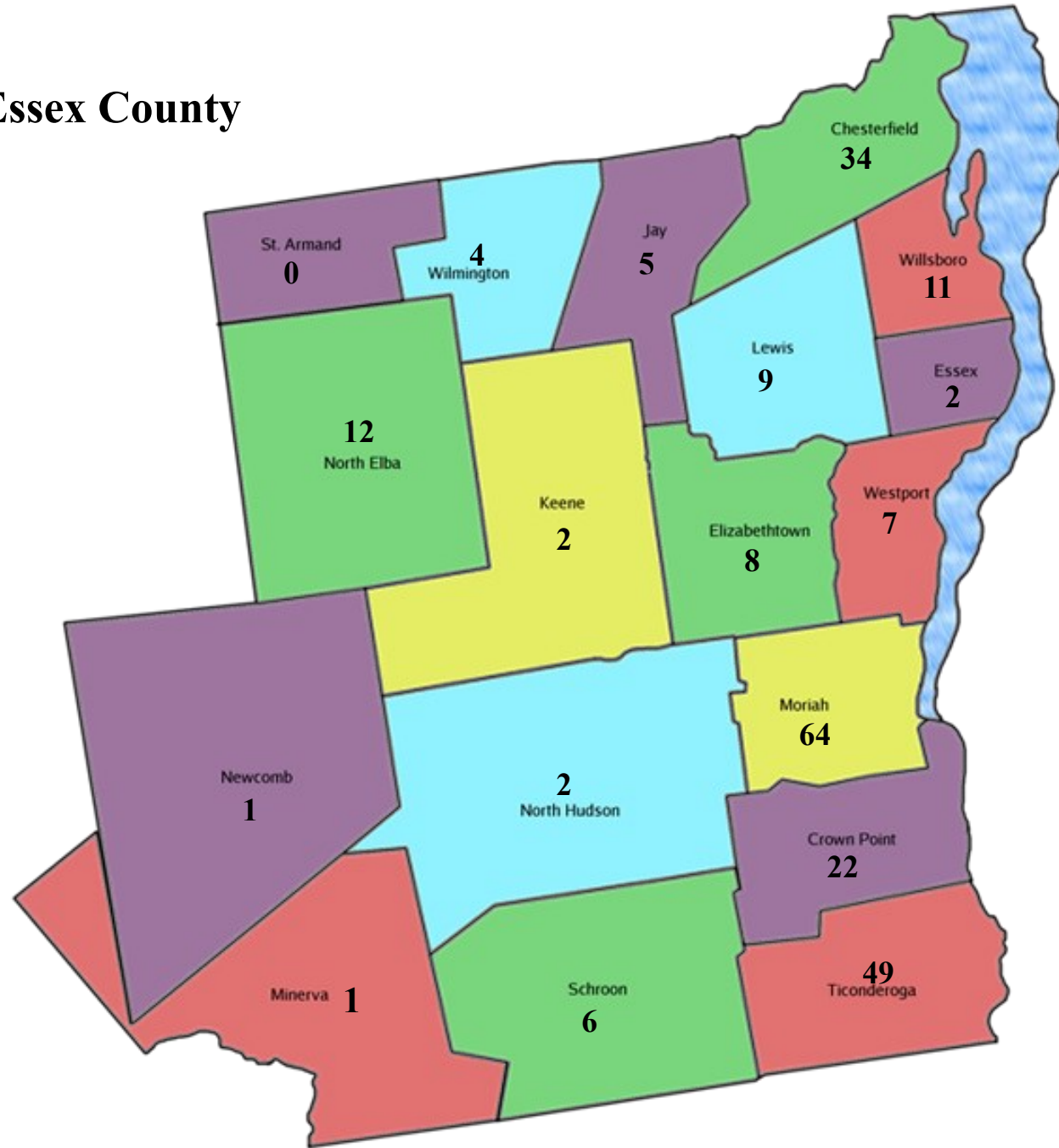
Staff -

- JoAnne Caswell, CEO
- Tracey Serlock, COO
- Robin Nelson, Chief Compliance/Quality Assurance & HR Officer
- Kayleigh Wojewodzc, Director of Clinical Services
- Paul Pulsifer, Director of Administrative Services
- Mackenzie Lahue, Director of Family Services
- Deb Mitchell, Manager of Programs & Development
- Peter Casanova, Office Manager/Admin. Assist.
- Michelle Janisse, Administrative Assistant
- Robyn Anson, Receptionist, FPA (Family Peer Advocate)
- Stacey Vaughn, Manager of HH Care Management/ Sr. HH Care Mgr.
- Brian Gay, Manager of IT Services/Sr. HH Care Mgr.
- Tara Stockwell, Manager of Peer & Direct Services Staff/ Sr. DS Professional
- Jennifer Deyo, Manager of Outreach & Training/Sr. HH Care Mgr.
- Kari Leclair, HH Care Mgr.
- JoAnne Rice, HH Care Mgr.
- Michelle Cressey, HH Care Mgr.
- Elise Silverstein, HH Care Mgr.
- Michael Aitken, HH Care Mgr.
- Josalynne Chavez, HH Care Mgr.
- Hamed Jangana, HH Care Mgr.
- Ryan Herlihy, HH Care Mgr.
- Janelle Bausman, Direct Service (DS) Professional
- Jim Jaquish, DS Professional
- Natalya Vuozzo, DS Professional
- Elizabeth Leclerc, DS Professional
- Kaley Manning, DS Professional
- Shelby DeLaire, DS Professional
- Ryan Yellott, DS Professional
- Jeanne Brown, DS Professional
- Buffy Marcil, Direct Service Provider, (DSP)/FPA
- Lisa Sheehan, FPA/DSP
- Jeannie Calderon, YPA
- Taylor Gohlke, YPA
- Cassandra Snow, DSP

**Number of unduplicated families, served in 2023,
(broken down by Town, shown in chart below) - 281**

Number of unduplicated children served, within these families - 337

Essex County



Franklin Co. - 0 Clinton Co. - 39 Warren/Washington Co.s. - 3



Program Highlights

Health Homes -

In 2023, as we reflect on the year, it is clear that there were areas where we fell short of our objectives, and there is a pressing need for introspection and strategic improvements to address these shortcomings moving forward. However, in the Wraparound portion of health homes, our program emerged as a beacon of excellence, setting new standards for client-centered care and holistic service delivery. The successful adoption and integration of the WRAP around program exemplified our dedication to evidence-based practices and innovative service models. Comprehensive training initiatives equipped our care managers with the requisite skills and knowledge to effectively support clients, resulting in successful discharges and sustained caseload management. Furthermore, our active outreach efforts, including participation in professional development days at schools, facilitated greater community engagement and awareness of our services, thereby enhancing access to vital resources and support systems for our clients.

Un-duplicated Number of children receiving services at Families First during 2023

Array	Program	# of Clients	# of Hours
**			
CFTSS	OLP	17	320
	CPST	90	3613
	PSR	48	1672
	FPSS	16	142
	YPS	14	398
HHCM	HHCM	246	-
ATL	NMCM	2	-
	Family Support	28	288
HCBS	CFASS	26	649
	Prevoc.	4	67
	Respite	15	879

Direct Services

The Direct Services program witnessed remarkable growth and impact in 2023, driven by the unwavering dedication of our providers and the implementation of best practices. Despite the agency facing workforce turnover and fluctuating eligibility criteria, our team delivered over 4903 individual service provision encounters to well over 200 youth, surpassing previous benchmarks and setting new standards for service excellence. Notable successes included increased collaboration with referral sources, expanded partnerships with community agencies, and enhanced support for youth and families navigating complex challenges. Through our collective efforts, we not only met the evolving needs of our community but exceeded expectations, leaving an indelible mark on the lives of those we serve.

Aid to Localities (ATL)

The ATL program emerged as a cornerstone of community engagement and support, offering a diverse array of events and outreach initiatives designed to foster social cohesion, resilience, and empowerment among families across the county. From recreational activities to educational workshops, our events provided invaluable opportunities for families to connect, learn, and thrive (see pictures later in this report). Through strategic partnerships with local agencies, including The Adirondack North Country Gender Alliance and the Suicide Prevention Team, we amplified our impact and advocacy efforts, raising awareness about critical issues and mobilizing support for vulnerable populations.

**

CFTSS (Children and Family Treatment and Support Services) - OLP (Other Licensed Practitioner); CPST (Community Psychiatric Supports and Treatment Services); PSR (Psychosocial Rehabilitation); FPSS (Family Peer Support Services); YPS (Youth Peer Services)

HHCM (Health Home Care Management)

ATL (Aid To Localities); NMCM (Non Medicaid Care Management)

HCBS (Home and Community Based Services) - CFASS (Community Self-Advocacy Training and Supports); Prevoc. (Prevocational Services); Respite (Respite Services)

A Parent Testimonial:

Program Report:

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the comprehensive report summarizing our organizational journey throughout the transformative year of 2023. As we delve into the details of our endeavors, accomplishments, and challenges, I am confident that this reflection will offer profound insights into the collective efforts that have shaped our organization's trajectory and impact within the community.

The year 2023 stands as a testament to our organization's resilience, adaptability, and unwavering commitment to excellence. Against the backdrop of unprecedented challenges and dynamic shifts in the socio-economic landscape, we navigated through uncertainty with a clear sense of purpose and strategic foresight. Through considered infrastructure development, programmatic enhancements, and community engagement initiatives, we not only weathered the storm but emerged stronger and more agile in the pursuit of our mission.

Infrastructure Development

Central to our strategic agenda in 2023 was the cultivation of a robust organizational infrastructure capable of supporting our evolving needs and aspirations. Recognizing the pivotal role of effective leadership in navigating regulatory complexities and driving operational excellence, we made strategic appointments of specialized directors to lead specific departments. These directors were entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring regulatory compliance, fostering innovation, and nurturing a culture of continuous improvement. Moreover, we prioritized the development of career pathways for our dedicated staff members, thereby fostering a culture of professional growth, empowerment, and retention within our workforce.

Regulatory Challenges and Programmatic Resilience

The end of the COVID-pause in Medicaid recertification presented formidable challenges for our programs in 2023. Many participants, caught unaware of the recertification requirements, faced the unintended consequence of losing their Medicaid coverage. Additionally, regulatory adjustments in Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) mandated swift adaptability to ensure seamless continuity of care and service provision. Despite these challenges, our organization demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability, leveraging our expertise, collaborative partnerships, and innovative approaches to mitigate adverse impacts on program participants. Through proactive communication, targeted outreach efforts, and strategic programmatic adjustments, we successfully navigated through regulatory complexities while upholding our commitment to delivering high-quality services to those in need.



Staff members, Casandra Snow and Liz Leclerc, working with kids at the Annual Summer Picnic, at Lincoln Pond.



I am a mother with 3 adult children and 2 young children and reside in Peru, New York. Our family business is a food truck which most of us work on throughout the year. We are a close-knit family and place value on being honest with each other and respecting each other's opinions.

My daughter in law referred me to Behavioral Health Services North (BHSN) for care management for my two youngest children. Her son has anxiety, and services through BHSN have been helpful with managing his anxiety. My two youngest children began to receive care management through BHSN. In early 2023 we were referred to Families First by our care manager. My son needed help with his coping skills, especially times when he would get angry or frustrated. My daughter needed help building relationships and being able to focus on completing tasks without getting frustrated.

I was a bit apprehensive at first and contemplated not having services, because I don't like asking for help. I also didn't want a "stranger" taking my kids out into the community. As I always say, "I like to keep my herd or tribe tight."

We were assigned a direct service provider who began to work with my family. She took time to get to know us and learn more about us. We developed goals to address the children's needs. We were provided with psycho-educational information, specifically about ADHD. My children and I completed a handout on this topic, and as the children completed this handout, I learned more about how ADHD impacts their ability to focus, learn, and perform everyday life skills. Because of this exercise, I was able to speak more intelligently when taking my children to their prescribing physician for management of their ADHD. It took a long time, but I was able to get both of my children on medication to help them function better in both the home and school settings.

Another important area that was addressed was my son's ability to manage his anger. The Direct Service Provider worked with him through the Angry Monster Workbook. During one visit, my son actually asked his provider to come up with a behavioral chart where he could earn privileges. Our provider then developed behavioral charts for each of the children. One of the important outcomes of those charts was how I was encouraged to praise my children each day for their efforts. So even though the charts were put in place to improve hygiene and daily chores, what I didn't expect was how those charts improved our relationships. My children respond so well to praise, and it helped me to acknowledge their efforts on a daily basis. Eventually I no longer needed to post those charts as my children were able to execute their daily chores more independently.

Another important aspect of direct services was the support I had when transitioning my daughter from middle school to high school. At the end of the school year, my daughter was barely passing a number of subjects, and I was worried she was going to fail 9th grade. Our provider helped me understand her needs and advocate for the right level of educational supports. We had a successful meeting with school staff, and I believe her success in 9th grade was because of that advocacy and support. I was also encouraged by our provider to monitor her academic progress daily. By doing so, we were able to catch missing assignments and homework assignments so she didn't get behind and overwhelmed. My daughter is doing well in 9th grade and missed the honor roll by only 2 points. My daughter has shown significant progress academically, which in turn improves her self-esteem.

Our provider facilitated a number of family meetings where we all talked about ways in which we could treat each other with more respect and kindness. Because of those meetings, we have less tension between us. I believe I'm a better parent, because the charts helped me stay on task and more focused in order to support my children. I believe my children are more apt to approach me and talk to me, because they know it's OK to talk about things.

Our provider also encouraged us to get out more. We enjoyed times at the Fun Spot, Fort Ticonderoga, and the AuSable Chasm which I might not otherwise be able to afford. The children loved all of those outings with our provider.

Our family was successfully discharged from both care management and direct services about a year ago. During the past year, I've noticed my children show their emotions more and talk about issues bothering them. Recently, my grandson asked if we could put the behavioral charts back up as the visual display helps all of us keep on track. Not only did I find this helpful, my children did too.

In conclusion, I'm grateful for the services provided by Families First and believe our family communicates better and gets along better than only a few years ago.

Sincerely,
Darcy

No Family Should Have To Struggle Alone

Development Report:

The Development Department had a change in leadership in 2023 after the retirement of Anne Griffin. Anne spent months preparing for her retirement and positioning the new head of Development to be able to transition into the role. We thank Anne for all she has done for Families First for 30 years and for her leadership in the Development Department.

We had a successful year in Development. We were able to receive grants from the Stewarts Shop, the Adirondack Foundation, and the Kelsey Foundation. Our Board once again was able to hold our annual \$10,000 raffle ticket drive, and the winning ticket was chosen at the E'town Day Community Event in July.

In July, Cathy and Wayne Johnston hosted a wonderful Friend Raiser at their home in Lake Placid. There were about a dozen people in attendance to learn more about our work here at Families First. Our Staff invited one of our families to talk about ways in which Families First has supported them. The youth was able to describe coping skills she learned through skill building services, and the grandmother was able to describe ways in which direct services helped her identify parenting strategies to help stabilize the relationship between family members.

In August, we recognized donors that contributed to us in 2022. We hosted a lovely dinner party in our new conference room, and attendees were grateful to be acknowledged for their support. We also began our Annual Appeal and received numerous donations as a result of that appeal.

Over the holidays, we were able to provide grocery store gift cards and turkeys to 88 families for their Thanksgiving meals, and gifts to 91 families, for a total of 218 children over the Christmas Holidays.

We're grateful to our Board Members for their commitment to Families First. They are truly committed to our mission and vision. They conducted a Telephone Thankathon in February where donors received a personal call to thank them once again for their generosity.

In conclusion, I'm very thankful for my new role here at Families First. It's an honor to walk in Anne's shoes and carry on in her legacy.

Sincerely,

Deborah Mitchell,
Manager of
Development



2023 Giving Categories:

Annual Giving:
\$66,260

Board Member Contributions:
\$26,107

Holiday Drives:
\$10,102

**Grants/Foundations/
Corporations:**
\$34,250

Total Funds Raised:
\$136,719

Unrestricted:
\$112,817

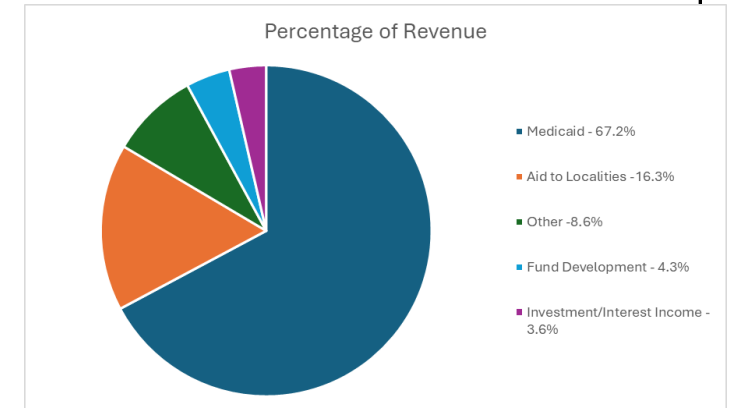
Restricted:
\$23,902

Financial Statement

Families First in Essex County, Inc., Condensed Financial Statements, Unaudited Year Ended December 31, 2023

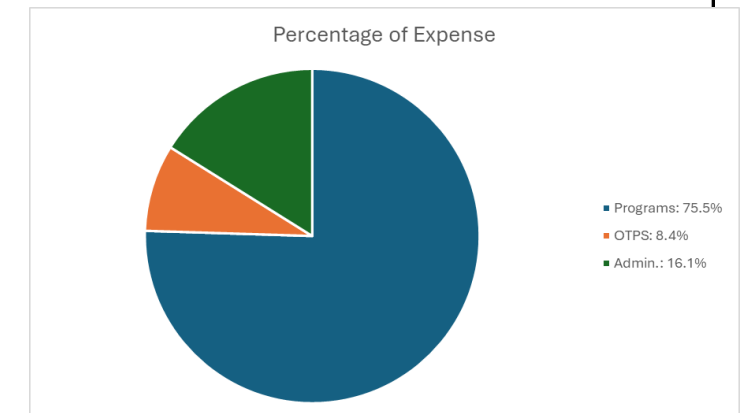
Revenues

Medicaid (Health Homes -\$1,160,865; CFTSS - \$796,090; HCBS - \$168,275)	\$2,125,230
Aid To Localities (NYS OMH)	\$ 513,912
Other (ARPA e-FMAP Covid funds: \$217,741; OMH Grant -\$43,200; SOC Grant - \$11,696)	\$ 272,637
Fund Development (Restricted & Unrestricted)	\$ 136,719
Investment/Interest Income	\$ 112,785
Total Revenue:	\$3,161,283



Expenses

Programs: (Health Homes, CFTSS, HCBS, Family Support, other - staff salary & benefits, staff mileage & training, Flex \$)	\$2,241,968
OTPS: (occupancy, insurance, equipment, supplies, telephone, EHR system, etc.)	\$ 248,556
Administration :	\$ 480,563
Total Expenses:	\$2,971,087
Net Revenue:	\$ 190,196



Administrative Services Report:

2023 marked a significant milestone for the **Compliance, Administrative Services/Quality Assurance, and Human Resources** Departments, as well as our outsourced **Financial Services**. Some updates include the following:

Compliance:

- ◆ Policy development
- ◆ Establishment of a compliance committee
- ◆ Training program
- ◆ Enhanced monitoring and reporting
- ◆ Active participation in regulatory trainings and forums

Administrative Services/Quality Assurance:

- ◆ New director appointed - Paul Pulsifer, Director of Administrative Services
- ◆ New manager appointed - Brian Gay, Manager of IT Services
- ◆ Audit challenges
- ◆ Streamlined billing process
- ◆ Establishment of a safety committee
- ◆ Accounts Payable process streamlined
- ◆ Technology enhancements

Human Resources:

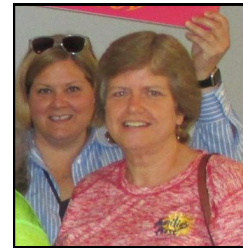
- ◆ The HR Department played a significant role in the organization's workforce: including recruitment/onboarding/employee relations
- ◆ Re-establishment of an internship program
- ◆ Insurance upgrades and provider changes
- ◆ Insurance broker change
- ◆ Health insurance provider change

Financial Services:

- ◆ Continued to work with DALLE Accounting for our fiscal needs
- ◆ Clean fiscal audit through Martindale/Keysor Company
- ◆ Continued management and oversight of Agency investment and endowment accounts
- ◆ Oversight of the NYS DOH ARPA Funds (staff bonuses, technology upgrades and building renovations)
- ◆ A \$100,000 increase approved for budget year 2024
- ◆ Successfully turned around an early revenue challenge by implementing a minimum production standard for Direct Service staff

In summary, the combined efforts of the Compliance, Administrative Services/Quality Assurance, and Human Resource Departments, along with our Financial Services in 2023, underscore our commitment to improving compliance, efficiency, financial strength, and employee contentment within the company. We are ready to confront obstacles, introduce enhancements, and propel ongoing achievements in the future.

JoAnne Caswell, CEO &
Robin Nelson, Chief Compliance /Quality Assurance and HR Director



2024 Budget - \$3,097,188

Medicaid: \$2,458,276
(79.4%)

•Health Home Care Management: \$1,417,500
•CFTSS: \$845,680
•HCBS: \$195,096

NYS Office of Mental Health (ATL): \$513,912
(16.6%)

•Family Support; CCSI; Non-Medicaid Care Management; Flexible Service Dollars; Transportation; Groups; Recreational Activities, etc.

Fund Development: \$125,000
(4%)

•Board Fundraising
•Grants, Foundations, Interest

Annual Giving Report:

Our Annual Giving Program runs from January 1 through December 31 each year. We recognize gifts made to the Annual or Endowment Funds and those gifts that were commemorative. A separate list recognizes donors, groups and businesses that supported our Holiday Drives.

We regret that space does not allow us to list all those who supported our special event fundraisers. If you bought raffle tickets, or attended a fundraising event we appreciate your support and want you to know that each of these gifts has made a difference to Families First.

Our apologies if your name has been inadvertently misspelled, omitted or incorrectly listed. Please call the Manager of Development for corrections.

Benefactors: (\$10,000 & Up)

Adirondack Foundation
Kelsey Trust
Winky Thomas **

Patrons: (\$5,000 to \$9,999)

Joseph & Linda Bogardus **
Daphne Hallowell **

Champions: (\$1,000 to \$4,999)

Mary Elizabeth Alexander **
Karen and Robert Ashline *
Babette Atz **
Rogers-Carroll Family Foundation *
Barry and Sharon Cook *
George and Sam Chandler
Keene Valley Congregational Church
Nick Muller
Clay and Sue Reaser *
Barbara Rehm
Stewart's Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stransky *
Charles and Delia Thompson *
Wielandy Family Charitable Fund

Sponsors: (\$500 to \$999)

Anonymous
Perry and Susan Babcock *
Ted and Catherine Blazer
Champlain National Bank
Dr. Glen and Malinda Chapman
Cloudsplitter Foundation *
Empty Bowl/Full Heart
The Essex Theater Company
Peter Gow
Janice Kyle and Hans Himelein **
Jo Ann Husslein
Richard and Joan Kelly **
Amy and David McNamara
Terri and Jim Morse **
New England Federal Credit Union*
Sarah M Smith *
Thomas and Janet Sober
Morris, Max, and Sarah Altman Trust

Sponsors: (\$500 to \$999) - Continued

Twincraft Skincare
Megan and Erik Young *

Supporters: (\$100 to \$499)

Robert Andrews and Margaret Wilson
Anonymous (2)
George Davis and Susan Bacot-Davis
John and Joanne Bartlett
Joseph and Patricia Beneshan *
Dr. Laurie Bergamini
S.E. and A.D. Bissell
Boquet Liq. Store -Terry McDougal **
Merwin and Carolyn Buckland
Mary and Tim Burke
Thomas Burleigh *
Essex Community Church
Monique Weston Clague **
Allan Clark
Linda Miller Clark *
Tracey Colby
Columbus House Association
John and Debra Cully
Laurie and George Daniels
Sandra Danussi
Jenifer Hale Deming *
Dominic and Melissa Eisinger **
Gail and Brad Else
Lynnette Ferguson
David and Bartel Fite
JoAnn Folin **
Kirk Kellogg Foundation *
Nancy Gaffney
Susan and Woody Gandy
Henry and Michele Gasiorowski, MDs
Steven and Susan Gifts
Jay Heald and Shalonie Persaud-Heald
Amy Heffner
Lawrence Hulbert
Robert and Priscilla Hurd **
Laura and Henry Kennedy
Linda Jackson
William Johnston **
Gregory and Carol Johnson
Wayne and Cathy Johnston
Terence and Mary Jane Lamb *

Supporters: (\$100 to \$499) - Continued

Dr. Daniel Larson
Patrick and Francoise Lennon
George Maffey
Judy Martin **
Raymond and Nina Matteau
Jonathan E McBride
Schelling and Annie McKinley
Robert and Joanne McShane **
Mold-Rite Plastics
William Montgomery
Ben and Joann Morris
Maureen Moynan
Mr. and Mrs. Archie Nelson **
Mickie and Mike Parker *
Charles and Gloria Pfund *
Elizabeth J. Pillard
Alan Hipps and Jane Preston
Red and Annie Smith
Paul and Kristine Santilla
Joyce Scovell **
Bev and Don Sears *
William and Mary Ellen Shakun
Elizabeth Sharp
Lisa and Greg Solakian
Donald and Ellen Stiles **
Maria Stitt **
Olivia Stransky
Richard P. Suttmeier **
John Sweeney and Lauren McGovern-Sweeney Family Fund
Carolyn and John Szeliga
Peg and Perry Teillon
George L. Topka **
Marilyn Trienens
Luvie A. Tuller
Carol and Steven Valachovic
Steve and Mary Valley
Steven Van Nort
Peter Weiland and Shannon Duffy
David and Mary Welch *
Ken White **
Kenneth and Patricia Wiley
Willboro United Methodist Women
Shelley Winters
David and Heidi Yerkes

Annual Giving Report - (continued)

Friends: (\$1 to \$99)

Linda Adams
Linda Alexander
Olive Alexander
 David and Mary (Pat) Anderson
 Anonymous (4)
 Judy Bertsche
 Lester and Lucy Bilow
Cheryl and Sam Blanchard
 Doris Bodie
 John and Elaine Bottiroli *
 George and Cam Brown
 Jane Burleigh
 Joanne Bush
 Vel Capewell & George Onni
 Janet and Bryan Coburn
Catherine Crohan
 Mr. and Mrs. James Cunningham *
 Marilyn Day
 Jane DeBeauchamp
 Mary DeGroff
 Ginny Delia
 Stan and Barb Dickinson
 Ms. Mary Lou Doulin
 Ronald and Susan Dubay
Essex Initiatives, INC
 Pledgeling Foundation
 Frontstream
 Michael and Janet Gaffney
 Howard and Karen Glass
 Norma Goff
 Tony and Bunny Goodwin
 Gordon Pratt Agency
 Laura J. Groshans *
 Bob and Carole Harsh
Sharon Haseltine
 Nona Hoskins
 John and Karen Huttlinger *
 Amy and Rob Ivy
 Brian and Laura Kiely **
 Phil and Ronwyn Kneller
 Kim Koch-Wright & Wayne Wright **
 Jay and Candy Kohen
 Charlotte Lichtenberg
 Betty Light *
 Bryant's Lumber, Inc.
 James and Kathy Marshall
 Patricia O. Marshall **
 Bernice Mennis
 Hildegard Moore
Patricia and Maynard Nelson

Friends: (\$1 to \$99) - Continued

Laura Newmark
 Gay Olcott *
 Eugene and Janice Orłowski
 Sherrell Osborn
Bill and Cindy Palen
 Gregory and Heather Perkins
 Richard Arndt and Phyllis Perna
 Cindy and Jerry Pulsifer
 LuAnn and Stacy Pulsifer *
 Peter and Lynne Reale *
 Mrs. and Mr. Vivian Reiner
 Robert and Beverly Rice
 Julie Robards
 Matt and Caroline Roy
 Walter and Dot Rushby
 Ken and Teresa Sayward
 Cynthia Schira
Jane Schneider
Patty Schwennker
 Larry and Leslie Shipp *
 Donna Sonnett
 Ms. Barbara R. Strowger *
 Jane Terlouw **
Laura Tyler
 Helene and Larry Vanderburgh **
 James and Colleen VanHoven
 Linda A. Warner *
 Rita Warren

Bequest Society:

Anonymous
 Monique Weston Clague
 Trisha Forrest
 Anne Griffin
 Richard Kelly
 Winky Thomas
 Helen Paul (realized)
 Jamie Paul Clark (realized)
 Henrietta Thomas (realized)
 Nicholas and Carol Muller (realized)



Tribute Gifts:

In Memory of : Dick Gaffney -

Catherine Crohan, Michael & Janet Gaffney, Patrick & Françoise Lennon, William Montgomery, Paul & Kristine Santilla, Jane Schneider, Kenneth & Patricia Wiley

In Memory of : Jamie Clark -

George Topka

In Memory of : Margie Emery-Ginn -

Dr. Glen & Malinda Chapman, Thomas & Hillary Stransky

In Memory of : Meredith Johnston -

Ken White, Clay & Sue Reaser

In Memory of : William Kissam -

Clay & Sue Reaser

In Memory of : Erol Turk -

Clay & Sue Reaser



Families First CEO, JoAnne Caswell and Adirondack Garden Club Co-President, Jennifer Lagor. The garden club donated -- over 40 wreaths to Families First clients.

Holiday Drives: This includes businesses, individuals, groups or families who contributed to our Thanksgiving Food Drive, who “adopted” a child for Christmas giving, or made it possible for us to purchase gifts for teens. 100% of these contributions of food and gifts are distributed directly to families.

In 2023, Families First provided, Turkeys and Grocery Store Gift Cards to 88 families, for Thanksgiving.

Anonymous; Karen and Robert Ashline; Bob and Carol Harsh; Keene Valley Congregational Church; Clay and Sue Reaser; Charles and Delia Thompson; Ken White

In 2023, Christmas gifts were distributed to 91 families (with 218 kids), throughout the region.

Linda Alexander; Anonymous; Babette Atz; Dr. Laurie Bergamini; Ted and Catherine Blazer; Joseph and Linda Bogardus; Boquet Liquor Store-Terry McDougal; Rogers Carroll Family Foundation; Allan Clark; Cloudsplitter Foundation; Sandra Danussi; Mary DeGroff; Susan and Woody Gandy; Gordon Pratt Agency; Sharon Hazeltine; Amy Heffner; Hans Himelein and Janice Kyle; Amy and Rob Ivy; Fred and Sheila Kapper; Richard and Joan Kelly; Dr. Daniel Larson; Judy Martin; Raymond and Nina Matteau; Jonathan E. McBride; Linda Miller Clark; Mold-Rite Plastics; Alan Hipps and Jane Preston; Walter and Dot Rushby; Elizabeth Sharp; Maria Stitt; Thomas and Hillary Stransky; Pete Suttmeier; Jan and Jane Terlouw; Marilyn Trienens; Steven Van Nort; Peter Weiland and Shannon Duffy; William and Mary Ellen Shakun; Shelley Winters



In early December, over 25 Adirondack Garden Club (AGC) members and their guests gathered at the Whallonsburg Grange to decorate lovely evergreen wreaths, many intended for members' homes but even more destined for those served by Families First in Elizabethtown, a county wide agency that works with families facing mental health challenges. The Families First wreath-making program was created four years ago and has become a favorite project for AGC members.

Names in **Bold** = new donors

Names with an * = donors who have given to FF for 5 or more consecutive years

Names with an ** = donors who have given to FF for 10 or more consecutive years