



# Breaking the Pattern

THE CHILDREN'S CENTER 2017 IMPACT REPORT

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### **Imagine if going home at night was your worst nightmare.**

If you were abused by a trusted friend.  
Neglected by your own family.  
Over and over and over again.

What you are imagining is a reality for many of the children we see.

These young lives experience patterns of pain, marred by devastation, trauma and shame.

But our children are inspiring examples of how, with professional support, love and trust, new patterns are possible.

Your support creates healthy lives filled with hope and optimism for children.

**Thanks to you, our children are breaking the cycle of abuse and building new patterns where courage and confidence can bloom again.**

With gratitude,

**Debora Matthews**  
*President & CEO*

**Renee Prewitt**  
*Board Chair*



# Tanajah's Story





**My grandfather sexually abused my mother as child. When my mother married, she told my father about it. Years later, after I was born, my father picked me up from my grandfather's house and saw me on my his lap. Something snapped.**

The next thing I remember is the phone ringing, and my mom hysterically crying that my dad shot my grandfather to death.

My dad went to prison. More family moved into our home — 14 boys under one roof with a little girl. One or more of them would pull me aside every night to sexually molest me, beginning in kindergarten. They said if I told, I'd be the one in trouble. I dropped out of school in the fifth grade. I never had a prom. I never graduated.

But like they say at The Children's Center, "No one can go back and make a brand-new start, but anyone can start now and make a brand-new future."

I have seven children, from nine to 30 years old.

My youngest is Tanajah. Tanajah is sweet, creative and caring, but she has a lot of behavior issues. She's diagnosed with ADHD, and struggles with anxiety disorders. My biggest fear for Tanajah is that the things that happened to me will happen to her.

Recently, I've taken custody of my three-year-old granddaughter, Joy. My older daughter tried to move Joy into an abandoned home. Joy was behaving in ways that made me worry that bad things might be happening to her.

With the help of The Children's Center, we got Child Protective Services involved. I don't want Tanajah or Joy living in fear or being put in harm's way. That's why I bring them to The Children's Center. The Children's Center staff helps them and has taught me how to help them too.

**I will no longer be silenced when it comes to the future for these girls. I believe that we can break the patterns of abuse and pursue a better tomorrow. We take it one day at a time, and The Children's Center is right by our side.**







# Jonathon's Story



**When I think back to three years ago, I can't believe how our lives have changed. Our son Jonathon needed help, and we didn't know where to turn. The list of issues we were dealing with was almost unbearable.**

Jonathon was acting out and wouldn't talk. He was pinching and hitting and kicking. He would cry all day long and he couldn't sleep at night.

When he started being physically aggressive toward others and biting himself, that's when I thought, "this is never going to end."

I was really afraid. I'd seen other kids with this behavior being taken away in an ambulance followed by a cop car. I was really just praying for a miracle.

A friend told us about The Children's Center and we decided to try it. The first glimpse of hope happened shortly after we walked in the door. I saw that Johnathon wanted to get to know the clinicians. I saw him trusting them. I thought, "Oh my god, he likes them."

We started to get speech therapy, clinical and medical services and supports coordination services at The Children's Center. Things started to look up.

I saw Jonathon talking and answering questions. He was using his charts and actually coping with getting through the day. We could go to dentist and doctor appointments and he would not flip out.

I loved that The Children's Center would take the time to do things step by step to get us where we need to go, instead of attempting to jump huge hurdles that we would never accomplish.

**The Children's Center has helped us more than anything else we've tried in the last 15 years. Now I see Jonathon smile more. He used to cry all the time. I get to see him smile every day, and that makes all the difference.**



# Kiara's Story





**One day, returning home from taking my mom to work, I carried my sleeping daughter, Kiara, into the house in her car seat. I placed her down on the floor and returned to the door, feeling unsure whether or not I locked it. Turning from the door, I saw a flash of light and then darkness. I was knocked unconscious.**

Hearing Kiara's cry made me come to. Opening my eyes, I saw my father over me with seven-pound plumber's pipe. Shocked, hurt, and angry, I asked what he wanted. He said, "Cash." Trying to focus my eyes, I saw my baby's car seat flipped over with her hanging upside-down. He wouldn't let me go to her until I retrieved the only money I had, which was in Kiara's piggy bank.

After giving him the piggy bank, I rushed to Kiara. Shaken with fear, I was able to convince him to let us go to the emergency room. My injuries included broken bones around the eye, a bone piercing through my upper nose, vision loss, and a massive headache which later developed into permanent brain damage.

My father received 25 years and was charged with attempted murder, breaking and entering, burglary and several other charges.

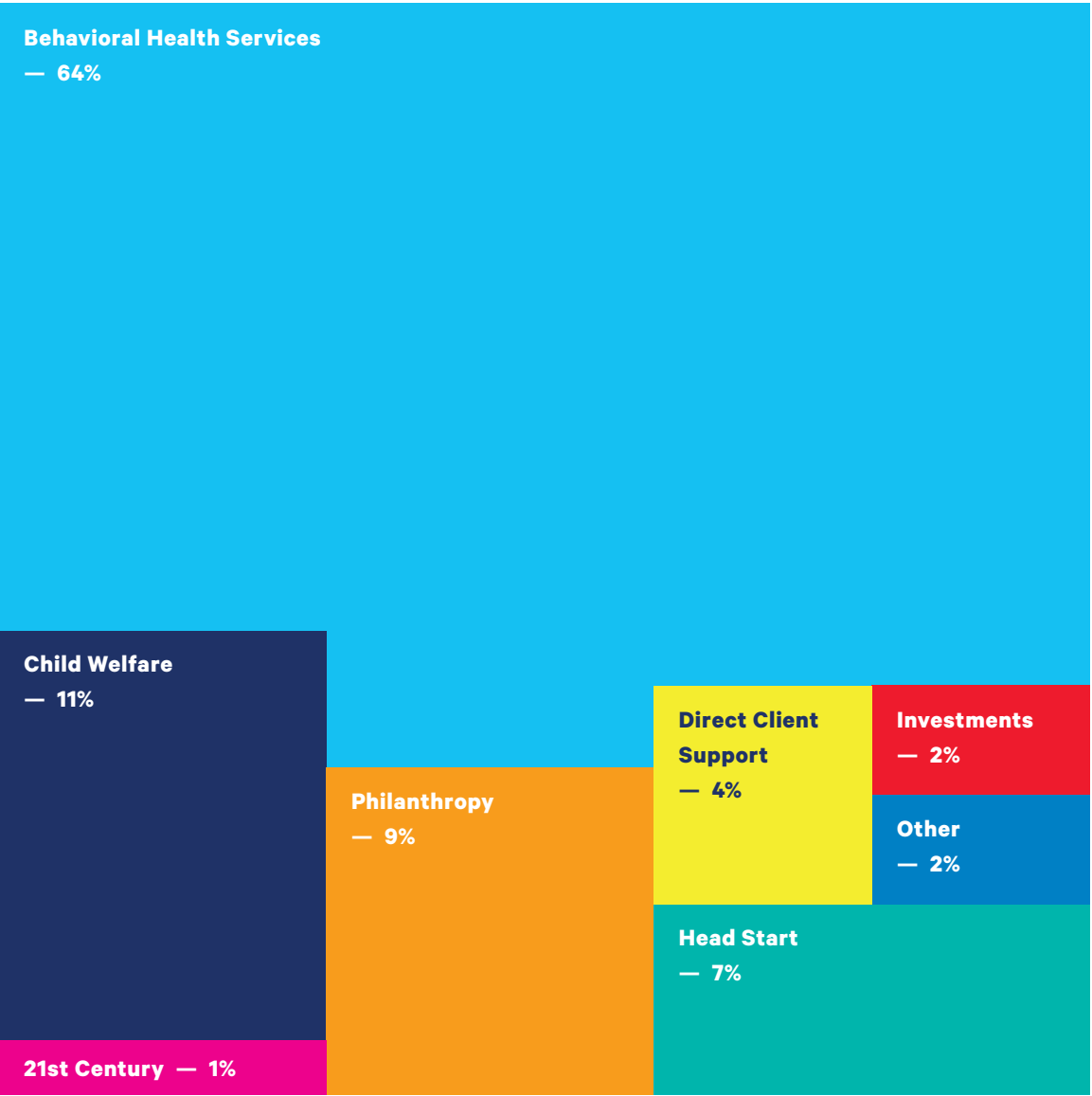
When Kiara was almost two, I realized she wasn't reaching some important developmental milestones. She wasn't talking. Her lack of verbal skills was very frustrating. Imagine your child crying uncontrollably and you can't tell if they are hurt, sleepy, or sick? Knowing she needed help, I began researching.

We then heard about The Children's Center. I remember that moment of hope when I thought, "This place can really help my daughter." Kiara is enrolled in the Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention Program. She spends 30 hours a week in a pre-school setting that includes one-on-one and group services. And it has changed our lives. This frustrated little girl, who spoke only a handful of words now won't stop talking. She loves saying, "Hi" to anyone she sees and expresses all she wants including her love for candy.

**Was her speech delay a result of that early trauma? I'll never know. What I do know is The Children's Center is a place of hope and healing. I know The Children's Center has given Kiara her voice, and for that I will be forever grateful.**







**Public Support & Revenue** **\$29,795,570**

Behavioral Health Services	\$18,999,468
Child Welfare	3,419,082
Philanthropy	2,537,109
Head Start (Education)	2,194,071
Direct Client Support	1,229,592
Investments	736,026
Other Revenue	460,132
21st Century After School Program (Education)	220,090

**Statement of Activities** **Year ended September 30, 2017**



**Operating Expenses** **\$30,012,165**

Program Services	\$21,926,635
Administration, Management, and General	5,246,139
Fundraising	1,659,075
Direct Client Support	1,180,316



Year after year, loyal supporters like you help the children and families we serve break the patterns of abuse and trauma. You make healing possible for thousands of children.

The Village of Giving

Helping children and families dream again takes an entire village. Our Village of Giving members make a five-year pledge of \$1,000 a year or more to help heal the city’s most vulnerable children. It doesn’t happen overnight, which is why our Village is so critical to our mission.

Visionaries – Ensuring a Safe Home (\$50,000 +)

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Just as our founder James Couzens left a legacy of making a difference for generations of Detroit children and families in need, the individuals recognized below have included The Children’s Center in their legacy plans through a bequest or life insurance policy. Some things do last forever.

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Believers is a community of life-changers who commit to a recurring monthly gift of any amount to help children overcome unimaginable challenges and grow into strong, healthy, productive adults.

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