



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The past year at Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families has been one of expansion and innovation. Improved access to early childhood education has always been something that we've worked toward at AACF. This year we expanded our education work to two important issues that affect our children: improving grade-level reading for children in the early grades and ensuring equitable opportunities to learn for all students.

AACF worked closely with the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation to launch the Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level reading, a statewide effort to make sure kids are reading at grade level by the end of third grade. We've also partnered with the Arkansas Opportunity to Learn Campaign to make sure all kids have an equal opportunity to learn. We look forward to continuing this work in 2013 to make sure all Arkansas children have an equal opportunity to learn and succeed.

The way we communicate about our work is also evolving. In November, we launched an incredibly successful social media campaign around our work to extend Medicaid to those who qualify under the new health law. By using new media tools, we were able to start a conversation about an issue of vital importance to the state of Arkansas. A new e-advocacy email system also allows us to target audiences around the state, encouraging them to take action by calling and writing their legislators.

As AACF turns 35, I am constantly reminded how we could not do this work without the help of our volunteers, board members, and donors. This year we held five different events honoring our 35th anniversary in Little Rock, Fayetteville, and Rogers, raising over \$25,000. In addition, over 50 people joined our Champion of Children giving circle by making a significant investment in our work (\$1,000 or more). We could not be more thankful for everyone's help and support and we look forward to building on the relationships we've made.



Executive Director
Rich Huddleston

Rich Huddleston

2012 AACF PUBLICATIONS

Serving Non-Violent Youthful Offenders in their Communities: The Costs and Benefits of a More Effective Juvenile Justice System for Arkansas

Reading to Learn: The Importance of Reading by the End of Third Grade in Arkansas

A Call to Action: The Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

Strengthening Medicaid Helps Families

A Relative's Guide to the Arkansas Child Welfare System

Critical Generation: Improving the Well-Being of Children of Immigrants in Arkansas

Pre-K: Access to Success in Arkansas

Advocates Guide to the 2012 Elections: Questions to Ask About the Issues That Matter

An Arkansas Student Bill of Rights: Using Opportunity to Learn Standards to Ensure Every Student Has a Chance to Succeed

2012 Child Poverty Update

A Citizen's Guide to Arkansas Public School Financing

Addiction Treatment and Long-Term Recovery in Arkansas: Just Say Yes! A Follow-Up Report





ARKANSAS ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

2012 HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Ensuring Health Care Coverage

In 2012, ensuring entire families have access to health coverage through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was a primary focus. We continue to see reductions in the number of uninsured children: 2011 data shows that just six percent of children are uninsured today, down from 9.4 percent in 2008. However, one in four adults remains uninsured in Arkansas. Our brief “Strengthening Medicaid Helps Families” demonstrated that the best way to ensure children get the coverage and care they need is by making sure parents can access affordable coverage.

A shortfall in Arkansas’s Medicaid budget made for a tense year with potential cuts to Medicaid being discussed. However, the state’s Payment Improvement Initiative and other efforts to reduce health care costs in the long run have helped bend the cost curve to reduce the shortfall significantly. We continue to share with legislators and advocates the story of Medicaid’s positive impact on Arkansas – the benefits to our state budget, our local communities and hospitals, and, most importantly, our neighbors. Our “Medicaid Toolkit” included a short animated film, county-level fact sheets, and infographics that demonstrate why Medicaid is important to the state. This toolkit has been recognized by our national partners and advocates across the country and is part of ongoing efforts to strengthen Medicaid and cover more children and families.



Rich Huddleston and Jerri Derlikowski attend the GLR Action Summit.

Kicking-Off the Grade Level Reading Campaign

In early September, we joined with our campaign partner, the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, to begin the Grade Level Reading Campaign. The goal of the campaign is that all Arkansas children read at grade level by the end of the third grade by 2020. The campaign has identified four areas that will enable Arkansas to impact grade level reading: school readiness, summer learning loss, chronic absence, and

parent and community engagement. Along with the campaign director, we conducted a series of presentations to education and civic groups. We also provided data on school performance for communities seeking grants for grade level reading programs. We gave a demonstration via webinar on how communities can use data to assess their grade level reading needs. During the year we completed initial Arkansas research on chronic absence (students who miss more than ten percent of the school year for any reason).

Providing an Equal Opportunity to Learn

The first annual Opportunity to Learn Summit in November brought together nonprofits, public officials, school personnel, and interested community activists to learn how to work together to ensure that the educational needs of each student are met. We partnered with the Arkansas Public Policy Panel who hosted the Summit. Our report on racial disparities in Arkansas school will serve as a catalyst for upcoming efforts to raise awareness for both Arkansas school officials and the general public. It will also serve as the impetus for initial legislation and further study to reduce discipline disparity in the state's school districts. During the past year, AACF also: published a report on the need for an Arkansas Student Bill of Rights; worked to ensure that NSLA funding be used more effectively to meet the achievement needs of the lowest-income students for whom it was designed; published a "Citizen's Guide to Arkansas Public School Financing;" and worked to protect Pre-K funding.



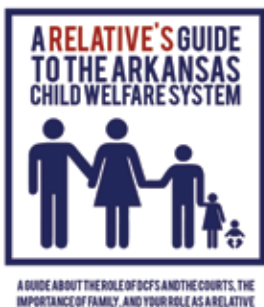
Geania Dickey and Dr. Gary Wheeler, our 2012 Friend of Children honorees.

Stopping Child Hunger

In the fall of 2010, the No Kid Hungry Arkansas Campaign launched with the goal of ending childhood hunger. At that time, Arkansas ranked first in the nation with the highest percentage of children who are food-insecure. The Campaign is a partnership among the Office of Governor Mike Beebe, the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, and Share our Strength (SOS). Increasing access to federal nutrition programs during the summer months was one of the priorities of the Campaign along with increasing participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). We were asked to evaluate both of these projects and provided an in-depth analysis of the efforts made throughout the state.



Brett Kincaid speaks to a packed house at a Policy Cafe in Little Rock.



Protecting Kids, Helping Relatives

Relatives of children in the foster care system can play an important role. However, it can be a scary and confusing time for the child, the parents, and the relatives. To help relatives navigate the Arkansas foster care system AACF co-authored "A Relative's Guide to the Arkansas Child Welfare System" with the DHS Division of Children and Family Services, the Administrative Office of the Courts Juvenile Division, and Arkansas Voices for the Children Left Behind. This guide explains what happens and how a relative can be involved.

Making Connections

The outreach team worked around the state to engage Arkansans in our policy work and make sure the Kids Count Coalition continued its quest to be "the collective force shaping public policy for children and families in Arkansas." We traveled the state conducting local policy café events, advocacy trainings, and the Pre-legislative conferences in central and northwest Arkansas. We met with hundreds of advocates across the state to help people understand how our economic future is tied to the investments we make now. Understanding the state's tax and budget process gives advocates an advantage when talking with their lawmakers.

We also developed our first evening Advocacy Academy in an effort to engage new advocates that are not able to come to daytime events. We designed and delivered customized Advocacy Academies for a wide range of groups including the Arkansas Coalition of Excellence, Voices of Children Left Behind, DIVAS, Inc., and Junior League of Little Rock. We had the unique opportunity to host two events in conjunction with the University of Arkansas's One Book One Community series.

Reforming the Juvenile Justice System

AACF continued its focus on developing public support for juvenile justice reform. AACF is promoting new policies that increase the use of proven-effective, community-based services that halt the use of secure confinement in treating non-violent, low-and moderate-risk youth who come in contact with the court. Relying on national research which indicates that locking-up these youth is unnecessary, ineffective, and very costly, AACF staff are working with judges, service providers, and community leaders to adopt a more humane and successful method of addressing the problems that brought these youth before the court. Town-hall style community meetings were held in Pine Bluff, Arkadelphia, and Magnolia, Arkansas where juvenile justice stakeholders and community leaders discussed the current state of juvenile services in their community and the need for more service options for judges. AACF staff chaired the DYS Strategic Plan Oversight Committee to help guide the state's efforts to integrate the latest research into the current plan for reforms.

Finding Solutions for Substance Abuse

AACF completed its partnership in the Closing the Addiction Treatment Gap (CATG) project with a final "Addiction Treatment and Long-Term Recovery in Arkansas: Just Say Yes!" follow-up report. It documented the \$1.15 billion drain on state expenditures related to substance abuse, particularly in the criminal and juvenile justice system. The report also documented Arkansas's successful launch of a promising Access to Recovery initiative that was filling a major void in the recovery services critical to long-term success for those completing treatment. The CATG project was successful in obtaining \$5 million for treatment of Medicaid-eligible substance abuse youth and adults, improved accountability and outcome measures for treatment providers, and a preliminary assessment of existing adult drug court practices.



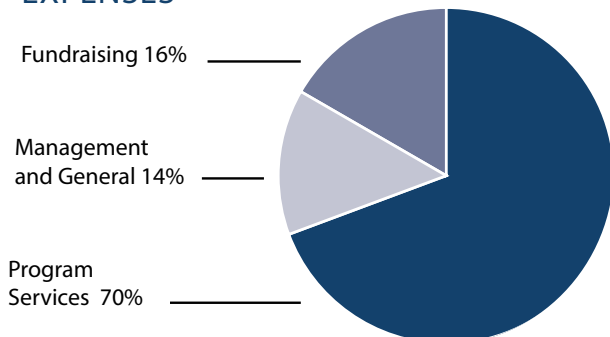
2012 AACF FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total Revenue & Support	1,375,313
Total Expenses	1,333,923
Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets	41,390
Decrease in Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	(90,360)
Change in Net Assets	(48,970)
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	928,762
Net Assets, End of Year	879,792

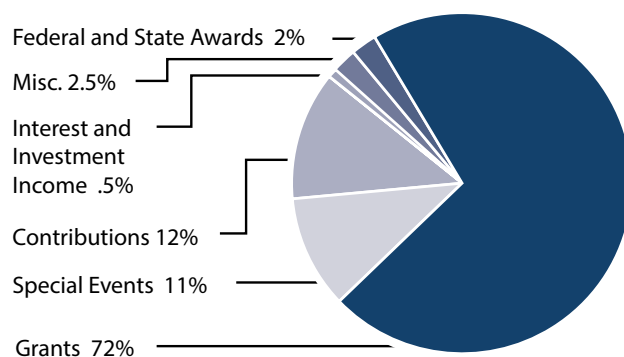
For the Year Ended December 31, 2012

From audited financials prepared by Thomas and Thomas LLP

EXPENSES



TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT



Moving Families Forward in Northwest Arkansas

The rise in child poverty in Northwest Arkansas continues to outpace growth at the state level, underscoring the increasing importance of providing a voice for children in a region of the state with growing political clout. In 2012, AACF's Northwest Arkansas office released the report "Critical Generation: Improving the Lives of Children of Immigrants in Arkansas." The report called for policy changes that can make a difference for these mostly citizen children, including better access to Pre-K programs, ARKids First health insurance, and a state-level DREAM Act to allow all Arkansas high school graduates equal access to a college education. We continued to increase our outreach to the Northwest Arkansas community with advocacy trainings, policy and legislative briefings as well as three 35th anniversary parties that helped raise money to sustain the work of the Northwest Arkansas office. The office in Springdale has been open since 2008.



Hershey and Denise Garner along with Laura and Kyle Kellams at NWA Soup Sunday.

2012 FUNDERS

Grant Funders (\$5,000 and more)

Annie E. Casey Foundation	First Focus	Riggs Benevolent Fund
Arkansas Center for Health Improvement	Fred Darragh Foundation	Save the Children
Arkansas Children's Hospital	Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation	Schott Foundation for Public education
Arkansas Department of Human Services	Nathan Dalton Whetstone Endowment/ARCF	Share Our Strength
Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance	New World Foundation	Stoneman Family Foundation
Arkansas Public Policy Panel	Open Society Institute	W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	Pew Charitable Trusts	Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation
David and Lucile Packard Foundation	Public Welfare Foundation	

Organization Donors (\$1,000 and more)

Axiom	Delta Dental of Arkansas	Olds Foundation
Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield	Entergy Arkansas, Inc.	Perkins & Trotter, PLLC
Arkansas Business Publishing Group	Friday, Eldredge & Clark	Quattlebaum, Grooms, Tull & Burrow PLLC
Arkansas Center for Health Improvement	Innovative Solutions for Educational Partnerships	Richard F. Jacobs, MD/UAMS Department of Pediatrics
Arkansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics	Legacy Termite and Pest Control, Inc	The Schmieding Foundation
Arkansas Children's Hospital	Mercy Health System NWA	United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas
Arkansas Community Foundation	Mitchell, Williams, Selig, Gates & Woodyard PLLC	Verizon Wireless
City of Little Rock	Morris Foundation	Wal-Mart Foundation
Cross, Gunter, Witherspoon & Galchus PC	Munro Foundation	Willard & Pat Walker Charitable Foundation

Individual Donors (\$1,000 and more)

Janie and Kim Agee	Denise and Hershey Garner	Kelly and Eddie Ochoa
Jay Barth and Chuck Cliett	Christine and Pete Hartman	Pam and David Parks
Hope and John Bradberry	Janie and Rich Huddleston	Liz Rainwater
Lynn and Joel Carver	Laura and Kyle Kellams	Chad Rodgers and Eric McDaniel
Shannon and Randy Dixon	Dee and John Lea	Amy Rossi and Joe Bryan
Khayyam Eddings	Nancy and Darrell Leonhardt	Anna and Aaron Strong
Donna and Lewis Epley	Senator Uvalde Lindsey	Sue and David Van Bebber
Jennifer and Todd Ferguson	Barbara Miles and Hank Bates	Becky and Gary Wheeler
Rick Fleetwood	Patricia and Jim Miles	

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**ARKANSAS
ADVOCATES
FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

www.aradvocates.org

The mission of Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families is to ensure that all children and their families have the resources and opportunities to lead healthy and productive lives and to realize their full potential.

LITTLE ROCK:

Union Station, Suite 306
1400 West Markham
Little Rock, AR 72201
Phone: 501.371.9678
Fax: 501.371.9681

NORTHWEST
ARKANSAS:

614 East Emma, Suite 127
Springdale, AR 72764
Phone: 479.927.9800
Fax 479.751.1110