LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

What a year it’s been! It was a milestone year of political change in Arkansas. Because of term limits and the changing political landscape at the state capitol, we lost many of our long-time champions of children’s issues on both sides of the political aisle. At the same time, tax cuts that leave out the poor and reducing government spending have both become high priorities at the state capitol, which does not bode well for support of public services impacting the well-being of our most vulnerable children and families. Our work during the 2015 legislative session was the most challenging in the 20-plus years I have been at AACF.

Because of these changes, we have spent a great deal of time thinking about how to elevate children’s issues to the top of the policy agenda in Arkansas. We’ve worked with the governor’s office and legislators to build public will and support for the investments we know our children need. We made a real effort to reach out to our allies, cultivate new ones, and educate those still on the fence.

We know what our children need to be successful later in life — a healthy start, a good education no matter their zip code, and opportunities to thrive in and out of school. And it doesn’t matter to us whether the state is considered red, blue, or somewhere in between, we’ll work tirelessly to make sure our kids have those things.

Sincerely,

Rich Huddleston

2015 AACF PUBLICATIONS

Arkansas’s Private Option Works for Families and Our Economy
Child Poverty in Northwest Arkansas
Education in the Post-Lake View Era
Kids at the Capitol 2015
Increasing Placement Stability in Foster Care
Summary of Arkansas’s Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Mental Health
Racing Toward the Finish Line: Kids’ Health Coverage in 2015
Missing the Mark: Race Equity and Missed Opportunities in the 2015 Session
Top Ten Principles for Health Reform in Arkansas
What Would it Take to be Number One in 2015
The State of Working Arkansas
The AAFC Guide to School Funding
The Credit They Deserve: Federal EITC Participation in Arkansas
The Business Case for Pre-K
What Schools Need to Succeed: A Look at Three Schools
Street Smarts: The Right Way to Fund Arkansas Highways
What do #ARKidsNeed from Birth to Age Eight
Parents’ Guide to Pre-K Advocacy
Wealth, Education, and the Opportunity Gap
The State of Early Childhood Education
CHILD HEALTH

Health care was a big focus during the 2015 legislative session. The Health Reform Act of 2015 was passed, which halted additional costs for Private Option enrollees and changes to the ARKids B program. The Act also created the Health Care Reform Task Force to make recommendations about the future of the Private Option and the entire Medicaid program. The Medicaid appropriation bill also passed without opposition, which allows the Private Option to continue to be funded. After the session, AACF brought together a bipartisan group of lawmakers and health leaders in the state for a fall health care forum. We have attended every meeting of the Task Force and will continue to give a voice to Arkansans who need affordable coverage.

While the debate continues on the future of the health care system, we’ve continued to celebrate coverage gains for children and families. Arkansas remains a national leader in dropping the number of uninsured adults and less than 5 percent of children are now uninsured in the state. Our outreach and enrollment work has also helped to get families enrolled in coverage. Through the Arkansans for Coverage (AFC) campaign we reached over 175,000 households through a mail campaign. We reached thousands more through the successful launch of the AFC website, radio ads, and social media.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

AACF was instrumental in drafting and enacting a bill that established the Youth Justice Reform Board. This governor-appointed board will make recommendations for crucial juvenile justice reform during the 2017 legislative session. AACF staff serves on this board and is working to ensure recommendations will significantly reduce inappropriate incarceration and expand effective community alternatives. AACF staff has testified before the Legislative Criminal Justice Task Force, published a guest editorial in the statewide newspaper, and participated in community forums across Arkansas to advance these important reforms.
**AFTER-SCHOOL**

Prior to and during the 2015 legislative session, AACF met with several lawmakers to push for a dedicated revenue source that would fund the Positive Youth Development (PYD) Act, a grant program to expand high-quality after-school opportunities statewide. From those meetings, two bills emerged, HB1958 and HB1570. While neither of those bills was successful, it enabled advocates to go on record before a legislative body highlighting the need for more investments in our children. Although our work did not result in funding, this year's efforts showed promise. More policymakers recognize the need for high-quality after-school and summer programs. AACF will continue to work closely with allies such as the Arkansas Out of School Network to broaden support and secure funding for after-school and summer programs.

**CHILD WELFARE**

Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson commissioned a review of the Arkansas Child Welfare System during the legislative session after it came to light that a legislator had “rehomed” the children he had adopted from the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The media attention brought out other adoptive parents who raised other issues with DCFS. Meanwhile, caseloads of DCFS caseworkers were nearly double (29 cases) the recommended national average (15 cases). AACF was interviewed as part of that review process, and the report from the review contained 10 recommendations on improving the child welfare system. AACF was appointed to the Child Welfare Oversight Panel to assist in implementing those recommendations.

**PROGRESS IN NWA**

While our work in Northwest Arkansas covers a wide range of AACF’s issues, the Springdale-based office includes a special emphasis on improving the public's understanding of the benefits of public investment. With a new governor and many of the state's legislative power brokers calling this region home, AACF's only satellite office continues to strengthen its influence in a region with growing political clout. All of the priorities of AACF – from child welfare and juvenile justice to education and health – are the focus of our Springdale-based office. But in 2015, we worked in particular to raise regional awareness of the need for high-quality pre-K, immigrant children's access to health care, and the growing need for critical support of our state's foster care system.

**TAX AND BUDGET WORK + ECONOMIC SECURITY**

AACF continues to stand up against unfair tax cuts that benefit the wealthy and loot public programs that everyone counts on like libraries and quality pre-K centers. This year we fought to redirect these unnecessary tax cuts toward programs that help working families stay at work and keep more of what they earn. We put particular focus on programs that would benefit the bottom 20 percent of earners in Arkansas, the only group left out of the income tax cut passed during the 2015 legislative session. Numerous blogs, reports, infographics, and presentations were devoted to broadening support for paid maternity leave, retaining unemployment benefits, increasing protection from wage theft, preventing barriers to public benefits, and implementing a state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for working families. Our most significant victory was defeating the Highway Robbery bill (House Bill 1346), which would have taken money from programs like quality pre-K and used it to fund highways. AACF will continue to speak out on behalf of families in Arkansas who struggle with low wages and a tax system that repeatedly gives handouts to the rich instead of working families.

**EDUCATION**

During the 2015 legislative session, we fought hard to increase the funding for Arkansas's quality pre-K program. Nearly 200 people, including children in two pre-K classes, participated in a Pre-K Day at the Capitol. Legislators read to the children, and teachers and parents visited with policymakers about the importance of early learning. While we did not secure the amount of funding the program so desperately needs, the one-time $3 million infusion awarded during the legislative session is the first increase the program has seen in many years.
In addition to pre-K, we also advocated for the creation of a legislative task force that would find ways to improve Special Education services in Arkansas schools. The legislation passed and AACF is serving on that task force to provide input and will later release a report on issues in Special Education.

AACF continued our work with the Arkansas Campaign for Grade Level Reading and the Arkansas Department of Education to reduce chronic absence in schools and to implement a program to support early literacy through parent engagement. We also worked with the Good 2 Great initiative to improve access to quality pre-K in Marvell, Elaine, and Prescott. Local community leaders, parents, and educators inform and guide these organizations on how to best help them in improving outcomes for children from birth to age eight. The hope is to provide a model for statewide pre-K policy change through empowered local community efforts.

**OUTREACH**

The Arkansas Kids Count Coalition held a Day at the Capitol during the 2015 legislative session. About 230 advocates from around the state converged to talk to legislators about important issues impacting kids, including pre-K, juvenile justice reform, and access to quality health care. AACF hosted a series of Post-Legislative Conferences in Little Rock, Rogers, and Jonesboro (in partnership with Enroll the Ridge). Nearly 200 participants took part in the conferences, which featured breakout sessions led by AACF staff members and other policy experts, as well as legislative panels and media speakers.

Advocates from around the state had the opportunity to take part in Policy Café events throughout the year. Policy Cafés are participatory mini-conferences featuring small table discussions, each facilitated by a policy expert, about a range of issues that impact the well-being of children and families in Arkansas.

---

### 2015 AACF FINANCIAL INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Information</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Revenue &amp; Support</td>
<td>1,943,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenses</td>
<td>1,889,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Unrestricted Net Assets</td>
<td>53,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease in Temporarily Restricted Net Assets</td>
<td>-125,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Net Assets</td>
<td>-72,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets, Beginning of Year</td>
<td>1,185,741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets, End of Year</td>
<td>1,113,728</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For the Year Ended December 31, 2015*

*From audited financials prepared by Thomas and Thomas LLP*

### EXPENSES

- Fundraising: 14%
- Management and General: 11%
- Program Services: 75%

### TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT

- Misc.: 4%
- Interest and Investment Income: 1%
- Contributions: 12%
- Special Events: 7%
- Grants: 76%
## 2015 Funders

### Grant Funders ($5,000 and more)

- Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Nathan Dalton Whetstone Endowment for Arkansas/ACF
- Arkansas Public Policy Panel
- Public Welfare Foundation
- Center on Budget & Policy Priorities
- Riggs Benevolent Fund
- Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Community Catalyst, Inc.
- Schott Foundation for Public Education
- David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- Stoneman Family Foundation
- Early Childhood Funders’ Collaborative
- The New World Foundation
- Fred Darragh Foundation
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation
- Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

### Organization Donors ($1,000 and more)

- Acxiom
- Mercy Health System NWA
- Adventure Subaru
- Methodist Foundation of Arkansas
- Arkansas Blue Cross & Blue Shield
- Mitchell Williams Law Firm
- Arkansas Center for Health Improvement
- Munro Foundation
- Arkansas Children’s Hospital
- Olds Foundation
- Arkansas Education Association
- QualChoice
- Arkansas Hospital Association
- RH Cuisine, LLC
- Arkansas Minority Health Commission
- Schmieding Foundation
- Bank of the Ozarks
- Second Presbyterian Church
- Arkansas Center for Health Improvement Foundation
- Southeastern Insurance Group
- Arkansas Children’s Hospital Foundation
- Subaru of Little Rock
- Arkansas Hospital Association
- UAMS Department of Pediatrics
- Arkansas Hospital Association Foundation
- Central Arkansas Library System
- Walmart Foundation
- Cross, Gunter, Witherspoon & Galchus
- William H. Bowen Family Foundation
- Delta Dental of Arkansas
- McMath Woods, P.A.

### Individual Donors ($1,000 and more)

- Drs. Eleanor Kennedy and Lee Abel
- Pam and David Parks
- Janie and Dr. Kim Agee
- Kathy and Dr. Donald Pederson
- Elise and Jim Argue, Jr.
- Martine and David Pollard
- Jay Barth and Chuck Clett
- Liz Rainwater
- Barbara Miles and Hank Bates
- Kathy and Dr. Bobby Roberts
- Bettie and Richard Bond
- Eric McDaniel and Dr. Chad Rodgers
- Janet and Mark Brown
- Johnnie and Tommy Roebuck
- Dr. Tom Bruce
- Amy Rossi and Joe Bryan
- Elisabeth and Joe Burak
- Anna and Aaron Strong
- Lynn and Dr. Joel Carver
- Stacey and Jan Sturmer
- Mardi and Dr. Phil Crandall
- Renita and Sean Trumbo
- Jerri Derlikowski
- Sue and David Van Bebber
- Kay and John DuVal
- Mary Ellen Vogler
- Kenya and Khayyam Eddings
- Christopher Vogler
- Terrie and Dr. Louis Elkins
- Becky and Gary Wheeler
- Donna and Lewis Epley
- Geoff Yamauchi
- Jennifer and Todd Ferguson
- Kelly and Dr. Eddie Ochoa
- Rick Fleetwood
- Mary Ned and Winston Foster, Jr.
- Martin and David Pollard
- Mary Ned and Winston Foster, Jr.
- Liz Rainwater
- Mary Ned and Winston Foster, Jr.
- Kathy and Dr. Donald Pederson
- Dr. Mary L. Good
- Martine and David Pollard
- Susan Hardin and Barry Haas
- Liz Rainwater
- Linda and Rush Harding, III
- Kathy and Dr. Bobby Roberts
- Christine and Pete Hartman
- Eric McDaniel and Dr. Chad Rodgers
- Sharon Heflin
- Johnnie and Tommy Roebuck
- Ann and Dr. Morris Henry
- Amy Rossi and Joe Bryan
- Janie and Rich Huddleston
- Anna and Aaron Strong
- Laura and Kyle Kellams
- Stacey and Jan Sturmer
- Lucille Kelly
- Renita and Sean Trumbo
- Dee and John Lea
- Sue and David Van Bebber
- Paul J. Magro Irrevocable Trust
- Mary Ellen Vogler
- Margot Martin
- Christopher Vogler
- Brenda Mize
- Becky and Gary Wheeler
- Kelly and Dr. Eddie Ochoa
- Geoffrey Yamauchi
2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AACF OFFICERS
James B. Argue, Jr., President
Jay Barth, Ph.D, Vice President
Kyle James, Treasurer
Lynn Donald Carver, Secretary

Patricia Ashanti
Hank Bates, JD
Terri Beiner, JD
Khayyam Eddings, JD
Mary Yeargin Flowers
Maricella Garcia, JD
Denise Garner
The Reverend Lowell Grisham
Deidre Lea
John Miller, Jr., Ph.D

Eduardo R. Ochoa, Jr., MD
Martine Downs Poliard
Jennifer Pierce, JD
Sandra Prater, RN
Chad Rodgers, MD
Tommy Roebuck, DDS
Willa Black Sanders
Derrick Smith, JD
Freddye Webb Petett
Gary Wheeler, MD

2015 FRIENDS OF CHILDREN AWARD RECIPIENTS
(from left) Bobby Roberts, Tjuana Byrd, Joe Thompson

ARKANSAS ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES 2015 STAFF

Rich Huddleston
Executive Director

Jennifer Ferguson
Deputy Director

Tamika Edwards
Director of Governmental Affairs

Lynne Gemmell
Administrative Assistant

Alexis Hampo
Communications Intern

Christine Hartman
Northwest Arkansas Office Coordinator

Kathryn Hazelett
Education Policy Director

Laura Kellams
Northwest Arkansas Director

Paul Kelly
Senior Policy Analyst

Marquita Little
Health Policy Director

Gerard Matthews
Communications Director

Cara Neal
Administrative and Events Director

Sarah Pearce
Health Care Policy Fellow

Bailey Perkins
Education and Fiscal Policy Fellow

Kerri Michael Sernel
Outreach Director

Mallory Van Dover
Development Director

Eleanor Wheeler
Senior Policy Analyst
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 235
Springdale, AR 72764
Phone: 479.927.9800
Fax: 479.751.1110

(clockwise from top) 2015 LR Soup Sunday chairperson Molly McGowan and Emily Argue Stotts with her daughter, Charlotte Stotts; Dr. Aaron and Anna Strong, Board Member Dr. Gary Wheeler; Nicole and Darrin Williams; Laura Kellams and Christine Hartman; Rick Fleetwood and Judy Tenenbaum toast to Soup Sunday; Clay Buchanan, Helen Buchanan and Dr. Kate Mitchell at the AACF Conference Room dedication; Dr. Chad Rodgers and Eric McDaniels.