



Building Resilience

Helping children, families and our community forge ahead


Project
Harmony®
Child Advocacy Center

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

A special thanks to
the young people in
our photos, who
help us honor the
confidentiality of
our clients.



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Dear Friends,

We continue to find ourselves in ever-changing times, and much has evolved over the last year. I welcome this opportunity to reflect upon our work and impact on children and families. Project Harmony continues to focus on our mission to protect and support children, collaborate with professionals and engage the community to end child abuse and neglect. We are so fortunate to have such wonderful community support, and because of your support, Project Harmony remains strong.

The pandemic influenced the severity of cases we saw due to the stresses in family homes — job loss, food insecurity, anxiety, depression, substance abuse and more. A lot of this went unnoticed until society started to slowly reopen. Project Harmony saw a significant increase of domestic violence cases in which children were involved. We also saw an increase in trafficking and children being impacted by mental health.

Fortunately, the team here was able to lean into technology to stay connected to families, provide telehealth services and continue our training efforts. Project Harmony responded to a need identified by Omaha Public Schools and delivered training to more than 9,000 staff members on how to manage teachers' personal resilience when working with children. The training is for everyone, from administration to facilities to IT, etc.

Like most industries, we were challenged with how to reset and make sure supports were in place to continue serving families moving forward. As a result of the last two years and the increase in children's needs in our community, the agency launched an expansion plan and hired additional professionals in all areas, including advocates, medical, mental health and forensic interviewer professionals. This expansion will allow the team to respond to the intensity and increase in cases while being available for each child and their family.

★ LETTER FROM OUR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Reflecting on 2021



Throughout these next pages, we highlight our collaborative and innovative approach to helping children and engaging families — made possible by the continued interest, involvement and encouragement of our generous donors and supporters. On behalf of the 6,473 children you helped serve, thank you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gene Klein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "K".

Gene Klein, LCSW
Executive Director



Regaining Courage

In 2015, Project Harmony interviewed Emily, a 14-year-old who disclosed sexual abuse by her uncle, causing turmoil within the family. Unfortunately, the uncle was found not guilty when the case went to trial. Emily and her parents received counseling services at Project Harmony to help them heal through this trauma.

At the time, no one knew that the uncle had also abused her younger sister, Mary, now 17 years old. In her recent interview at Project Harmony, she disclosed sexual abuse from ages 4 to 10. Mary told the interviewer she did not previously disclose her experience because of the conflict and pain her family was already facing — she felt she needed to be the strong one.

Mary has been referred to Project Harmony for counseling services, and this case will be reviewed by the Investigative Multidisciplinary Team as it moves forward for prosecution to include her sister's past disclosure and an additional survivor who has come forward.

When asked why she decided to disclose now, Mary said she had told a friend in Bible study who encouraged her to tell her family. Her faith and support from her family gave her the courage to speak up.

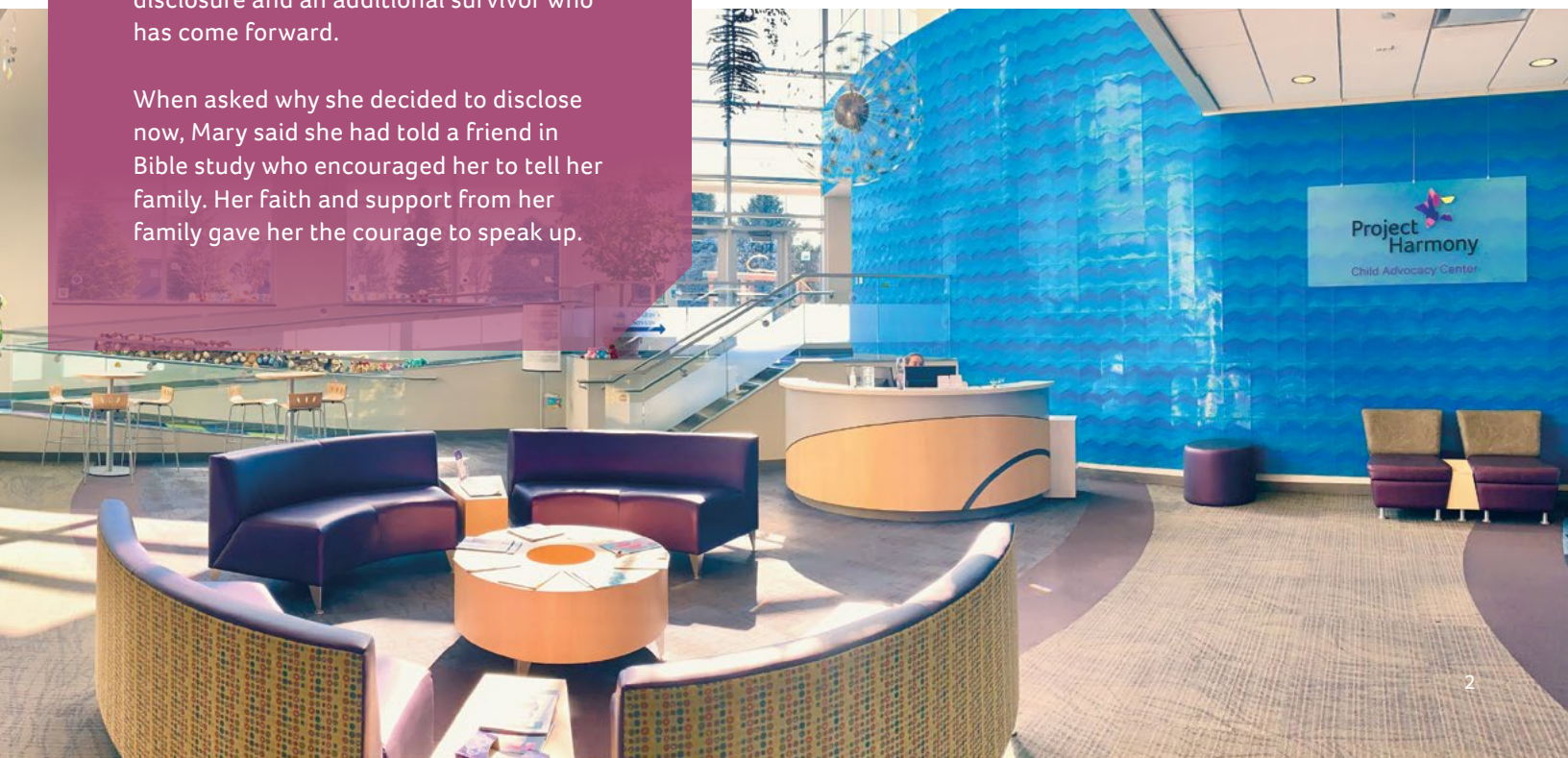
★ AT-A-GLANCE STATS

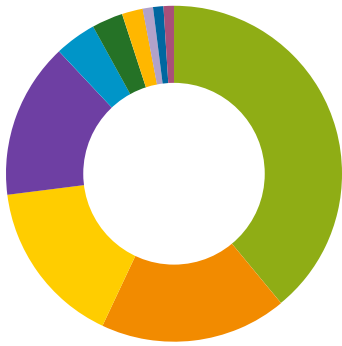
A Year of Resilience

In 2021, the persisting pandemic only heightened the needs of the children and families we serve. Project Harmony reevaluated, retooled and reinforced our services to be a resource of resilience and partner in prevention to ensure our clients — and our community — can forge ahead unhindered.

6,473 Total Children Served

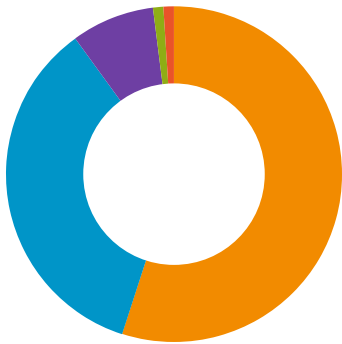
This includes preventative and response services.





Race of Children Served

- 40% White
- 18% Black or African American
- 16% Hispanic
- 15% Not Reported
- 4% Biracial
- 3% Multiracial
- 2% Native American
- 1% Asian
- <1% Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- <1% Other



Gender of Children Served

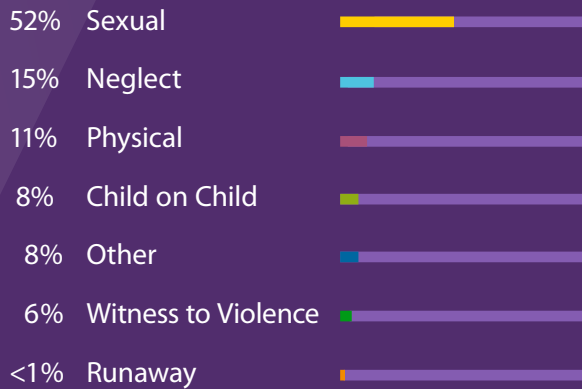
- 55% Female
- 36% Male
- 8% Not Reported
- <1% Nonbinary
- <1% Transgender

Age of Children Served

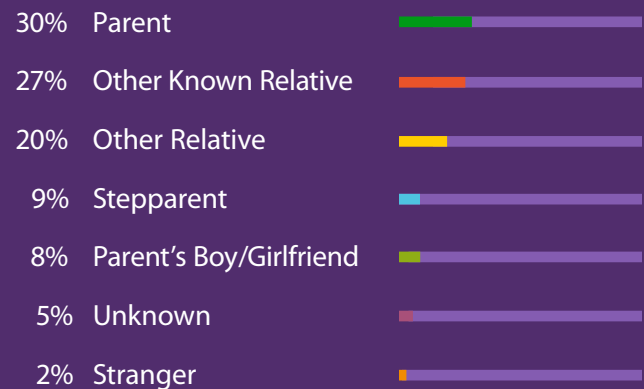


Age not recorded: 2%

Intakes by Type of Abuse



Child's Relationship to Alleged Perpetrator*



Children's Response Services

5,270

Advocacy sessions provided

1,841

Forensic interviews conducted

138

Multidisciplinary meetings

2,959

Youth received mental health sessions

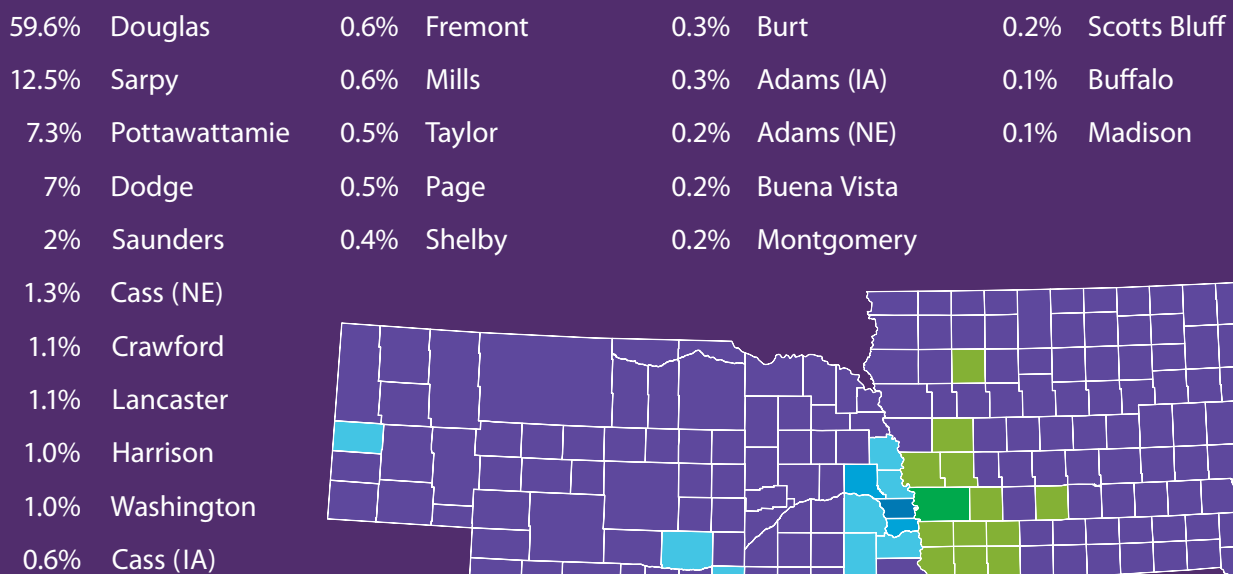
1,191

Medical exams conducted

105

Missing youth clients served

People Served by County*



* In some cases, the percentage may add up to more than 100%, as there may be more than one perpetrator.

Reinforcing Our Culture

Project Harmony engaged in a year-long pursuit of a cultural assessment across all departments.



This process included cultural focus groups, online culture assessment and individual leader culture interviews. Through this assessment, themes were identified and action plans were created.

In addition to creating a culture that is focused on the health and wellbeing of its employees, Project Harmony also invests in training. Monthly staff meetings provide training around Growth Mindset and The Five Essentials of Wellbeing. Training focuses on how to build resiliency within our culture by learning from mistakes, failing forward and innovating. Applying a growth mindset has helped our culture practice mindfulness when feeling stuck or fixed in different areas for an individual, team or even department's growth. Creating this culture helps employees hold each other accountable in our challenging work while also supporting each other in the process.

Focusing on our employee experience at Project Harmony, our HR team has put a lot of energy into employees' first-year journey, incorporating more touchpoints across the organization, creating additional survey and feedback opportunities and implementing a new-hire breakfast with the executive team.

Growing Our Team

In 2021, we had roughly a 10% growth, ending the year with 116 employees.

108	5	3
Full-time	Part-time	Casual/on-call

Increasing Diversity


With intentional focus on recruiting diverse candidates, Project Harmony remains committed to increasing the diversity of our team even more in 2022.

13.2% Identify as Black or African American
3.7% increase from 2020

16.4% Identify as Hispanic
3.15% increase from 2020

6.9% Identify with a veteran status

Engaging the Next Generation

 **In 2021, we saw a rise in Generation Z employees, doubling from 7% in 2020 to 14%.**

Reimagining Our Footprint

In 2021, the Project Harmony Training Institute filled 21,508 training seats. We offered over 25 unique courses in a variety of modalities including in-person sessions, instructor-led virtual courses and completely asynchronous content.

Our greatest growth in 2021 was in our geographic footprint. Traditionally, participants in our training opportunities have been clustered within a few hours of driving to the Greater Omaha area. As our use of technology to deliver content has expanded, we've seen our geographic impact grow as well. By the end of the year, individuals from over 30 states and seven foreign countries had completed our training, and it's becoming more common to have people from outside of Nebraska participate in our instructor-led virtual courses. Individuals have completed our asynchronous courses at all times of the day and night. Agencies as far away as New York and Florida have called to schedule instructor-led virtual training for their employees.

Testimonials From Course Evaluations

“ This training was great and opened my eyes to a lot I did not realize or think about. Anyone should take this course, no matter what field of work they are in.”

— In-person training attendee

“ The webinar was a very positive experience! I enjoyed speaking with Jonathan Davis by phone prior to the event, via email and during the event. I look forward to future courses.”

— Instructor-led webinar attendee

“ I have attended Project Harmony classes in person and have walked away a better, more knowledgeable person. The instructors have always been excellent. This is my first online course, and I really enjoyed it. The online course is a wonderful refresher or backup to a classroom. I have the highest praise for all of Project Harmony.”

— Asynchronous online course attendee





25+
Training Courses
Offered

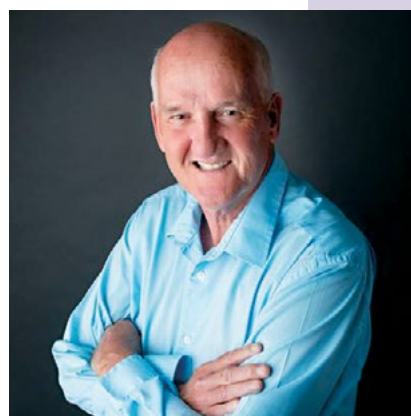
21,508
Training Seats Filled
Including live classroom, Zoom
and online webinar trainings

Little Connections

—John Bergin, Connections Provider

Community Connections

The team at the Ronald McDonald House told Project Harmony it takes families a long time to warm up to anything new and to not expect any participants in the first few weeks. The first session, held on November 3, 2021, had four families participate.





Number of *Connections* Referrals by School District

286 

Bellevue Public Schools

208 

Millard Public Schools

916 

Omaha Public Schools

279 

Papillion La Vista Community Schools

10 

Ralston Public Schools

17 

Private school

67 

Not reported

Location of Therapy Sessions

72%

School

14%

Office

13%

Teletherapy

1%

In home



During 2021, **1,853 students** were referred, a 50% increase from 2020.



60 group therapy sessions were also held, an 18% increase from the previous school year. The *Connections* team had to work hard given the limited access to students, school space and interruptions to in-person learning.



Resources for Refugees

Khine Myo and her children participated in Parent University when her family came to Omaha as refugees from Burma. At the time, they didn't know anyone. In Parent University, they gained a sense of belonging and support. While Khine was in a parent class, little Nye was just a few doors away, immersed in early learning activities. Before going home, they would stop in the Family Resource Center for take-home kits and books. Everyone was able to share a love of learning.

Parent University empowers Khine with resources to continue her own education. Today, Khine is already more than halfway to her next goal: a GED. From there, she plans to go to college to become an early childhood education teacher and is even considering a career in criminal law further down the road.

Khine says, "I want two things for my children — to be kind to others and to be educated."

 **PARENT UNIVERSITY**

Responding to Family Needs

Flexibility has always been a very important part of the Parent University program as staff work with and engage families who have busy lives. During the pandemic, Parent University pivoted to help families learn how to operate electronic devices and successfully log their children into their school iPad.

Typically, parent-child interactive assessments are performed through in-person video recordings. The educational navigators and family liaisons adjusted along with the evaluation team to utilize Zoom to create and upload the recordings for assessment and scoring. Parents received feedback on their strengths and next steps during these interactions.



200



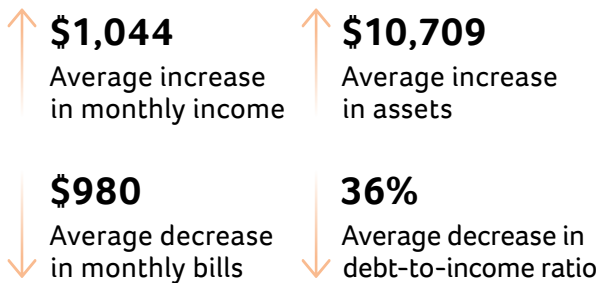
Parents enrolled

in Parent University

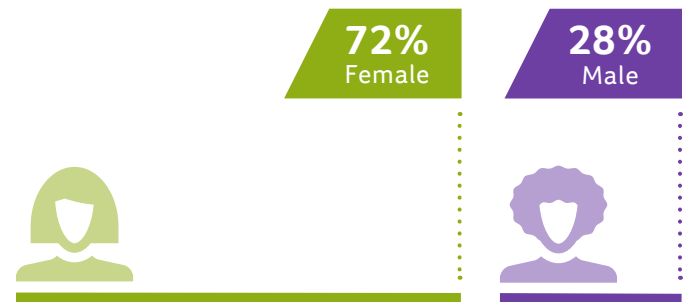
Parents increased financial stability

New understandings increase economic security

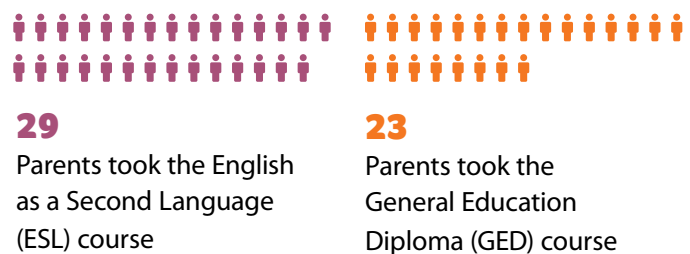
In this 10-week course, parents learned financial skills to move past difficult experiences. One year later, more than half the parent participants gained greater economic and social stability.



Gender of parents served



Parent participation



Through support from Parent University with daily literacy activities, the percentage of families with a library card increased from 58% to 80%. Families who visited the library at least once per month increased from 35% to 60%.



Information gathered from the 2021 Learning Community Evaluation Report



Rebuilding Hope

Amari first came to Project Harmony in 2018 when she was 14 years old due to allegations of sexual abuse when staying with a friend. At the time, she was in foster care.



Again in 2019, Amari came to us due to sexual abuse by a caregiver and mentor. In 2020, she returned again with Laelle, another young girl in foster care. There was concern that both girls were being trafficked, and Laelle disclosed in her forensic interviews that she had experienced sexual abuse and trafficking. Project Harmony's family advocate worked with their two caseworkers to coordinate therapy services.

Investigation

In September of 2020, the Omaha Police Department (OPD) and Homeland Security (HSI) identified a group of gang members who were trafficking girls out of local motels. All of the girls had a vulnerable history, but two girls in particular stood out.

Laelle was a frequent runner from school and the foster care system. Amari was also a runner from foster care and a gang, and was a survivor of sexual assault and child abuse. Both girls went on the run together and met up with other gang members. The gang members made them dress up in lingerie, took photos and posted explicit ads offering the two for sale to other men.

Ultimately, OPD and HSI were able to get disclosures, conversations from electronics and locate the ads that led to the arrest of four gang members who participated in the trafficking of these girls.

Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Staffing

This case was initially reviewed in 2018 to discuss Amari's placement and mental health services. In December 2020, OPD requested a special staffing for the trafficking case in which they were moving forward with indictments. OPD gathered all youth-serving organizations before the indictments took place to make sure the girls involved received appropriate services throughout the process.

OPD gave an update about the history of this investigation and anticipated next steps. During the staffing, OPD detailed the dynamics of the trafficking case with all the case professionals and stressed the importance of relationship building and follow-through with the girls.

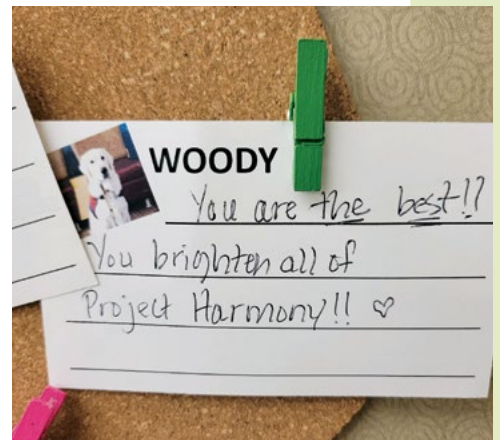
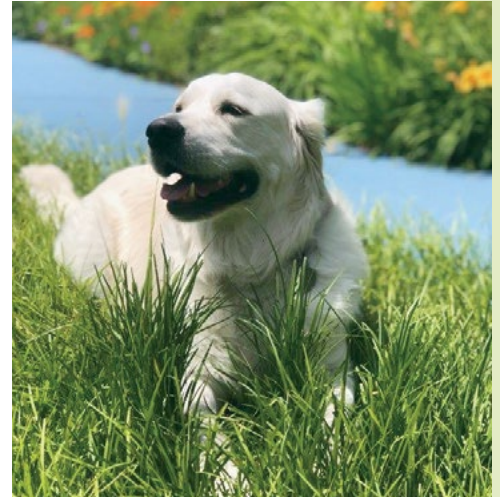
At the time of the staffing, Amari was reported missing, so there was also a discussion about how case professionals should proceed once she was found. OPD stressed the importance of giving Amari choices and a voice in her next steps to minimize the chances she would run again. Overall, the staffing was successful in educating case professionals about the dynamics of trafficking cases and developing a plan to help ensure the safety of the youth involved.

Therapy

Both girls received therapy at Project Harmony. Initially, Laelle was resistant, but she's met weekly with her therapist for over a year to work on developing healthy coping skills and learn about boundaries and healthy relationships.

Amari was also reluctant to talk in therapy. Project Harmony's facility dog, Woody, accompanied her to her first session, and her therapist arranged to have Woody present for all the following sessions. Amari often sat on the floor petting Woody, which helped her feel comfortable opening up and trusting her therapist.

Laelle and Amari are now living in foster placement that will likely become their permanent homes. Both girls have stayed connected and found very loving and nurturing homes. This past summer, the two families went on a trip to California so the girls could see the ocean for the first time.



Woody, Project Harmony's facility dog, is proof that good dogs do make great listeners. He works throughout the agency, including forensic interviews, with family advocates and in mental health sessions.

2021 Appointments

- 174** Mental health sessions
- 131** Forensic interviews
- 58** Advocacy sessions
- 2** Medical exams



Reconvening Support

Many thanks to all who attended our events and supported Project Harmony in a variety of ways. Without you, our life-changing work would not be possible.

Speaking of Children

The 14th annual Speaking of Children Luncheon & Conference raised \$190,488 in 2021. A very special thank you to Children's Hospital & Medical Center and the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Nebraska for their partnership. Project Harmony would like to thank all our 2021 sponsors and our honorary chairs, Lisa and Dean Hollis, and event chairs, Jackie Kroeger and Sue Seline, along with committee members and donors.

Kids First Award Honorees:

John Bergin
Arbor Family Counseling

Peg Harriott
Child Saving Institute

Capt. Tracy Scherer
Special Victims Unit,
Omaha Police Department



Project Harmony Executive Director Gene Klein and Honorary Chairman Dean Hollis facilitate a brief Q&A with keynote presenter Diana Nyad — swimmer, author, actor, advocate and child abuse survivor.

Halfway to St. Patrick's Day

Our 17th annual Halfway to St. Patrick's Day event was hosted by the Project Harmony Service League at Champions Run. Live music from the Fishheads filled the inside of the pavilion while guests enjoyed an evening of traditional Irish food, drink and frivolity. Back by popular demand, "Journey Across Ireland" featured games and prizes associated with the counties of the Emerald Isle. Thank you to Jackie and Kevin Conway, Jessie and Matt Forrest, Megan and David Hawk, and Andrea and John Marshall for chairing the annual event, raising \$164,597.



Top pictured left to right: David and Megan Hawk, Kevin and Jackie Conway, Andrea and John Marshall, and Jessie and Matt Forrest

Bottom pictured left to right: Joe and Erin Pogge, Connor and Lauren Lund, and Julie and Rob Hockney

Thank you for your continued compassion and generosity.

Each of you contributes to the safety and wellbeing of children and families: providing a place where children can use their voice without fear; ensuring hope, health and resilience; and spreading awareness, generating learning and ultimately protecting the most vulnerable among us.

Annual Fund Drive

Special thanks to our annual fund drive chairs — Karen and Cal German and family — whose dedication helped raise an additional \$334,231 for Project Harmony.



Pictured left to right: Annie and Henry German, Karen and Cal German, Elizabeth and Tim Langan, and Cortland and Carolyn Silliman

Golf Invitational

The 26th Annual Project Harmony Golf Invitational raised \$102,951. Held at Indian Creek Golf Course, 168 golfers and over 60 volunteers helped make the invitational a tradition of great golf for a great cause. Thank you to Jim Jansen, Kevin Thompson and Ryan Zabrowski who chaired the event.



Pictured left to right: Jim Jansen, Ryan Zabrowski, Gene Klein and Kevin Thompson

Project Be Someone

Across the country, more than 2,800 people have taken the pledge to *be someone*.

We are proud to acknowledge our donors of \$250 or more on Project Harmony's Be Someone wall. Donor names are updated from the previous calendar year on National Be Someone Day, recognized on July 21. In 2021, we added 33 names to the wall for a total of 604 supporters at the \$250 level or higher.

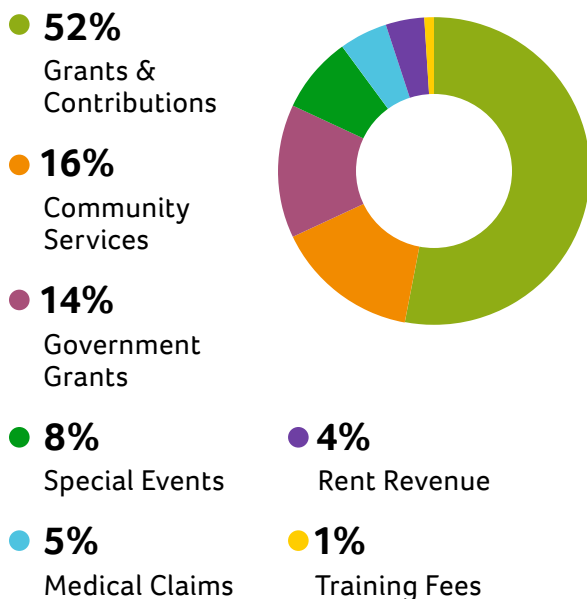


A Year in Review

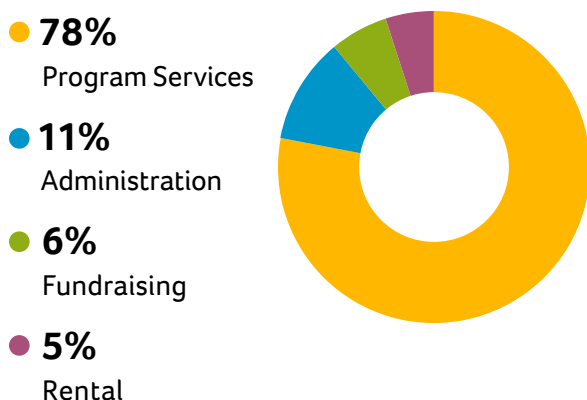
Project Harmony is grateful to all whose gifts have supported and sustained our programs over the past year. Every dollar helps us continue our mission to restore courage in every child who walks through our doors.



2021 Operating Revenue by Source



2021 Operating Expenses



\$9.5 million
Grants and contributions
raised in 2021

Revenue in Dollars

Grants & Contributions	6,748,752
Government Grants	1,769,214
Special Events	1,004,258
Rent Revenue	574,313
Medical Claims	650,547
Training Fees	160,255
Community Services	2,001,601
TOTAL INCOME	\$12,908,940

Expenses in Dollars

Response Services

Forensic Interviews	1,016,283
Coordination	678,544
Medical	929,187
Advocacy	1,111,475
Mental Health	765,541

Prevention & Early Intervention Services

Connections	2,638,671
Training Services	842,205
Parent University	731,113
Community Services	1,272,041

Supporting Services

Administration	1,466,434
Fundraising	828,274
Rental	572,143

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$12,851,912**

REVENUES OVER EXPENSES **\$57,028**
from Operations



A Message From Our Board Chairman

As parents, we have an innate ability to see within our children their hopes, their dreams, their gifts and the potential they bring to this world.

We know that the children in our community are the most vulnerable, and we are lucky to have an organization like Project Harmony that is focused on ending child abuse and neglect. They have become the national leader in creating a culture that protects and supports children, engages families, allows the different state and local organizations to collaborate, and rallies the community to *be someone*.

The life-changing work of Project Harmony would not be possible without the continued support from community members like you. I invite you to join our family in making a profound difference in a child's life — setting them on a new course toward healing and hope.

Together, we can end child abuse and neglect.

Sincerely,

Mike Mackintosh
Board Chairman

★ BOARD MEMBERS

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– University of Nebraska*

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Timothy Fitzgibbons, M.D.

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Terri Schrager

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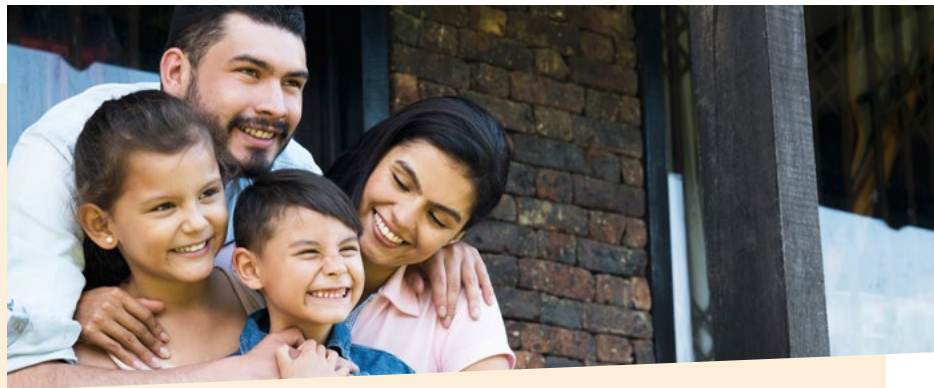
Anne and Arnie Weitz

Barbara and Wally Weitz

Judy and Gale Wickersham

Ellen and Stavely Wright

Lyn Ziegenbein



“ The work of Project Harmony has never been more urgent. Each and every child, despite their circumstances, deserves the opportunity to realize their fullest potential. Eliminating child abuse and neglect is essential for children to thrive, and this is the mission of Project Harmony. It has been inspiring to witness the expertise, dedication and resilience of the Project Harmony team. This organization is a gift to our community, as well as one of the most respected Child Advocacy Centers in the nation. With your help, Project Harmony can continue their remarkable work.”

— Nancy Edick, Board Member

2021 Board Committees

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Brandon Hamm
Dean Hollis
Jim Jansen
Don Kleine
Leo Knowles
Mike Mackintosh
Erin Owen

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Nancy Montanez-Johner
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Kristin Saxena
Albert Varas
Tammi Winchester
Michelle Zych





Help Us Restore Hope and Healing for Children and Families

Every child deserves to grow up safe, happy and healthy. We couldn't make this a reality without the support of leaders like you paving the way to help protect and advocate for our children.

In 2021, your support impacted the lives of 6,473 children, setting them on a course toward healing. Please consider helping us make an even greater impact in 2022.

- » Make a donation today at ProjectHarmony.com/donate
- » Meet your personal financial goals while making a difference for our future. Learn more at ProjectHarmonyLegacy.com
- » Join our growing community of advocates by pledging to *be someone* at ProjectBeSomeone.org





Child Advocacy Center

11949 Q St. Omaha, NE 68137

**Working each day to build resilience for
all children and families.**

402-595-1326
info@projectharmony.com
projectharmony.com



If you suspect a child has been abused or neglected, call:
NEBRASKA: 1-800-652-1999 or local law enforcement
IOWA: 1-800-362-2178 or local law enforcement

