



# Children's Service Society of Utah

Kinship Care • Adoption • Caregiver Support

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2024



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*Celebrating 140 years of  
strengthening Utah families*



# A Letter from the Executive Director

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*Dear Friends,*

As someone who has dedicated my life to working with children and spent over 23 years in the nonprofit world, I have seen firsthand what it means to be in need and to have a kind hand extended in support. One of the most personal experiences I've had with this came when my grandchild, Aiden, was born with severe special needs. He spent over nine months in the NICU, and his parents, young and full of hope, faced the incredible challenge of caring for a child with complex needs while also raising two energetic daughters. The weight of those responsibilities was immense, but the support they received from nonprofits made a world of difference in their lives. These organizations offered services that truly impacted our family during a difficult time, and it was a reminder of the power that a helping hand can have.

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*Your donation becomes a lifeline—offering hope, a brighter future, and a loving embrace.*

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At Children's Service Society of Utah, we celebrate every donation we receive. Whether big or small, each one represents hope, possibilities, and love. When we open an envelope or see a Venmo notification, our hearts are filled with gratitude as we envision the positive change your generosity will bring to the families we serve.

Our programs touch many lives, from families struggling to find work and affordable childcare, to grandparents raising grandchildren, to adoptive families embracing new children. Your donation becomes a lifeline—offering hope, a brighter future, and a loving embrace.

I want you to feel the same excitement we feel when you choose to support us. I want you to know that your contribution directly impacts a child's future for the better. For 140 years, Children's Service Society of Utah has been able to do meaningful, life-changing work because of the support we receive from people like you—our partners, donors, and friends.

From my desk today, I send you my heartfelt thanks. You make a difference, and we need you to continue driving this important work forward.



Encarni Gallardo  
CSS Executive Director





# Mission

Children's Service Society of Utah empowers families, caregivers, and professionals through services supporting the safety and well-being of children.

# Vision

To ensure every child has a safe, loving home.

# Guiding Principles



## *Safe Children*

We protect every child's right to safety, support, and stability.



## *Strong Communities*

We build networks of care that uplift and connect all families.



## *Caring Families*

We nurture the relationships that help children thrive.



## *Board of Directors*

Liesl Einerson, President

Gayle Wyner, Vice President

Steven Lukens, Treasurer

Delavan Dickson

David Jack, Secretary

Dr. Sam Goldstein

Tiffany Sowby

Sierra Hansen

Leigh Gibson

Aaron Quintana

Velvet Rodriguez-Poston

E. Jay Overson



# 2024: The Year in Moments

*Goodness in every step!*



## Fun Run

*Running for the fun of it!*

CSS hosted its first fun run since 2019, aimed at promoting health, wellness, and family bonding. Participants of all ages joined in the run, and children had the chance to participate in a Kids Fun Dash. The event also included family-friendly activities, refreshments, and prizes, making it a fun and active way to support the organization's programs and services for children and families.

## Gala

*"The Good We Do"*

CSS' annual gala, themed "The Good We Do," brought together supporters, donors, and community members for an evening of celebration and fundraising. The event featured inspiring stories, live entertainment, and a silent auction, all aimed at raising funds to support the organization's mission of helping children and families in need.



## Halloween

*Costumes. Candy. Community Joy.*



CSS celebrated Halloween with a fun and festive trick-or-treat event in the office. Staff members dressed up in creative costumes, and children from the community were invited to join in the fun. The office was decorated with a Candyland theme, and kids enjoyed collecting candy and participating in Halloween-themed activities, creating a joyful and memorable experience for all.



# Adoption

- 176 Adoptive Parents
- 14 Expectant Parents
- 231 Individuals Served
- 29 Support Groups

Children's Service Society of Utah (CSS) continues our 140 year legacy of serving adoptive families, birthparents, and adoptees through our ethical adoption program. While we continue to provide the ethical pre-adoption services we are known for, our commitment to supporting Utah's adoption community continues as we work to grow the post-adoption supports we offer to all members of the adoption, foster and kinship networks. In addition to our Connections program to support search and reunion, we also offer adoption-related counseling to anyone touched by adoption. We hold support groups for adult and teen adoptees, birthparents, and for adoptive families.

We are always working towards improving post-adoption resources available in the wider community. In 2023, CSS was chosen as the only Training for Adoption Competency (TAC) training site in the state of Utah. By providing TAC, an accredited curriculum developed by the Center for Adoption Support and Education that seeks to expand the adoption competency of mental health treatment providers, CSS is helping ensure that adoptive families can access adoption competent therapeutic care in their communities.



# Adoption Highlights

## *When Love Means Trusting Another*

Early this year, we received a call from a new parent who tearfully explained that he and his spouse were considering making a plan for adoption for their child who had been born a month earlier with a genetic condition that would cause lifelong challenges. He explained that they loved their daughter, but felt overwhelmed and unprepared to support the challenges they were learning she would have. They asked if CSS would help them identify a family who would be better prepared to give their daughter the care they wished they were able to provide.



*"We set out to find not just a family— but the right family."*

We immediately set out to find not just “a family,” but “the *right* family” for their daughter. We received many inquiries about the baby, but upon hearing about the baby’s needs, many potential adoptive families felt her care would be too much to take on. One family, however, seemed to be a wonderful fit. They had a good understanding of what this infant’s needs would be and with their education, professional knowledge, and background providing foster care, they felt they were well prepared to meet them. CSS coordinated an initial meeting between the birth parents and the prospective adoptive family to see if the birth parents felt this was a good fit. When the two families met, there was an instant connection. The birth family felt confident that their daughter would be safe and loved in this adoptive home. CSS continues to check in and provide the support both the birth and adoptive families feel they need. The two families stay in touch with photos, updates, and visits, and their daughter continues to grow and thrive with the love and support of her family.

## *Creating a Space for Healing*



We opened newly renovated therapy offices to better serve the families and children. As leaders in Utah for adoption competency training and child-parent psychotherapy, we wanted to create a comfortable space for families who need post-adoption services.

This new space allows us to better provide our therapeutic services for families touched by adoption.



# Care About Childcare

3,500

Parents Served

1,000

Childcare  
Providers Served



Care About Childcare is an online system designed in partnership with the Office of Child Care. It is intended to promote quality child care and helps parents locate licensed caregivers in their area. Care About Childcare at Children's Service Society of Utah provides resource and referral services to childcare providers in Salt Lake and Tooele Counties regions.

Programs specific to our region are The Kids in Care (KIC) program, Refugee Start Up grant and technical assistance, and Finger Printing services. The Kids in Care program reimburses regulated child care providers for caring for children while parents engage in formal job search activities. The KIC program is for unemployed parents who meet specified financial eligibility requirements based upon federal regulations. Refugee Start up Grant provides financial and technical support to Refugees who would like to open a licensed childcare business. Finger fingerprinting services for individuals who need to be processed to work in a child care or after school setting.

# Care About Childcare Highlights

## National Provider Appreciation Day

Every spring, Care about Childcare celebrates Provider Appreciation Day, in which we invite Child Care Providers in Salt Lake and Tooele Counties to join us for food and fun. We celebrate their dedication, compassion, and commitment to making a difference in the lives of young children.

*"Childcare providers hold the future of tomorrow in their hands, so we take this day to celebrate them and all they do."*

— Carolyn Lawson, CAC Program Director

National Provider Appreciation Day started in 1996 in New Jersey by a group of volunteers who saw the need to recognize the tireless efforts of providers who care for children of working parents. Each year since momentum and support have grown, and recognition currently includes individual and government organizations throughout the United States. A proclamation is signed each year by many of the State Governors.



## Halloween Haunt Trunk-or-Treat

During the Murray Halloween Trunk-or-Treat, over 3,000 people stopped by our Harry Potter- themed booth to receive a book, a sweet treat, and information about Children's Service Society of Utah and our programs. The event featured performances from The School of Rock Band, pictures with Star Wars characters and Disney Princesses from Characters and Crowns.





# GRANDfamilies



229 New Families Served

129 Guardianships Facilitated

20 10-week Sessions Completed

102 Friend 2 Friend Events

814 Medicaid/SRG application assistance and referrals

GRANDfamilies Kinship Care at Children's Service Society of Utah supports kinship caregivers and children by providing inclusive support services in collaboration with trusted community partners to build safe, stable, and resilient kinship families.

Youth are engaged in GRANDfamilies through psycho-educational classes, Botvin LifeSkills courses, and monthly Friend-2-Friend activities. This year, GRANDfamilies opened 9 offices in Utah: Box Elder, Cache, Davis, Salt Lake, Tooele, Uintah, Utah, Washington, Weber, and Statewide virtual services.



# GRANDFamilies Highlights

## *Growing Our Roots*

GRANDfamilies is proud to have held grand openings for four new office locations in Box Elder, Tooele, Uintah, and Utah counties, expanding our reach to better support families across Utah. These new offices serve as hubs for connecting grandparents and relatives raising children with essential resources and services. The grand openings were well-attended by our community partners, including the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS), Utah Foster Care, local school districts, and other support agencies, as well as our kinship caregivers.



## *A National Model*

GRANDfamilies was the recipient of the first Exemplary Program Designation through the Grandfamilies and Kinship Support Network: A National Technical Assistance Center. We are proud of this accomplishment, as it recognizes the hard work and dedication of all our staff in growing and improving necessary support services over the last 21 years.



## *Summer Support*

A group of volunteers helped GRANDfamilies with our Davis county Luau event in August last Summer. The group put together some fun luau bags for each of the children who attended the event.



# Home Visitation

147

Home Visits

78

Children Served

54

New Families  
Served



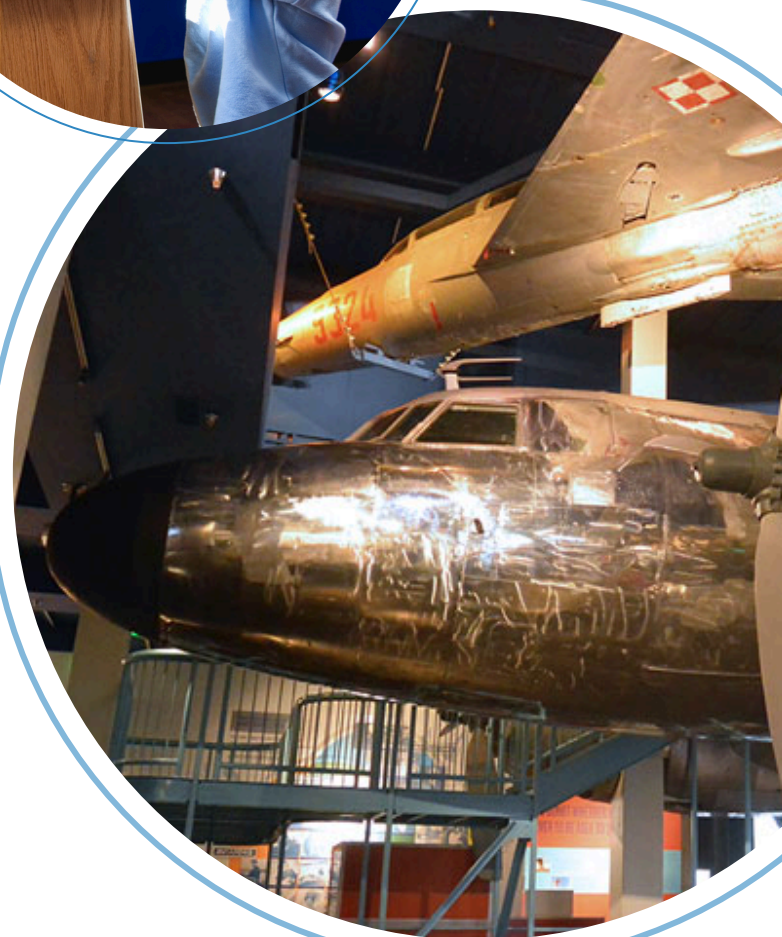
The past year, HV has been able to provide opportunities of growth to not only our families but to our staff.

In November, HV staff were able to attend the Early Childhood Mental Health Summit that focused on how we as community providers can help foster a safe and secure environments for children to navigate their mental health. The conference included a keynote speaker who specializes in trauma informed care and was followed by breakout sessions. Throughout these breakout sessions, staff were able to learn essential skills that can help them provide the best possible care that HV's clients need. Not only did we learn skills, but we were able to connect with other community providers who are able to offer specialized services for our clients. It was a great opportunity for us to expand our network and to help us provide the best possible visits we can.



# Home Visitation Highlight

Most families in the Home Visitation program live on low incomes and are not able to afford taking their children to museums. Group Connection events build community for young parents in the program by providing enriching activities outside of the home to museums, the zoo, or the aquarium. The Group Connection event at The Leonardo was one of the highest attended events. For many of the families, this was their first visit to a child-friendly museum that focused on imagination and innovation. The families were so grateful to experience this through their children's eyes!





# Building Blocks



26

Parent Teacher Conferences

30

Pre-K Entry and Exit Profiles (PEEP) completed

2

Staff Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials completed

Building Blocks has had the opportunity to host a variety of community events, such as holiday parties, community days, and read-a-longs, to engage with parents and families. We've also had the privilege of celebrating the achievement of two staff members who earned a Level 3 certification on the career ladder by completing 40 hours of training.

Building Blocks has also implemented the Creative Curriculum, a research-based program aligned with Utah's core standards, and participated in a Peer Learning Community (PLC) from August 2023 to May 2024. The PLC was designed to deepen our understanding of the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) used in the Childcare Quality Rating System (CCQS) observations, which played a key role in helping us achieve a high-quality rating for our center this year. While our initial CCQS practice observations scored below high-quality, our final assessments showed teachers consistently meeting the high-quality standard.

In addition, we completed training and successfully implemented the Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3), conducting a total of 40 assessments.



# Building Blocks Highlights

## *Building Bright Spaces*



Two renovations completed: a new playground for infant/toddlers and an update to the main playground

## *Celebrating Big Steps*

Pre-K graduation in 2023 for all of the children moving on to Kindergarten



## *Wrapped in Kindness*



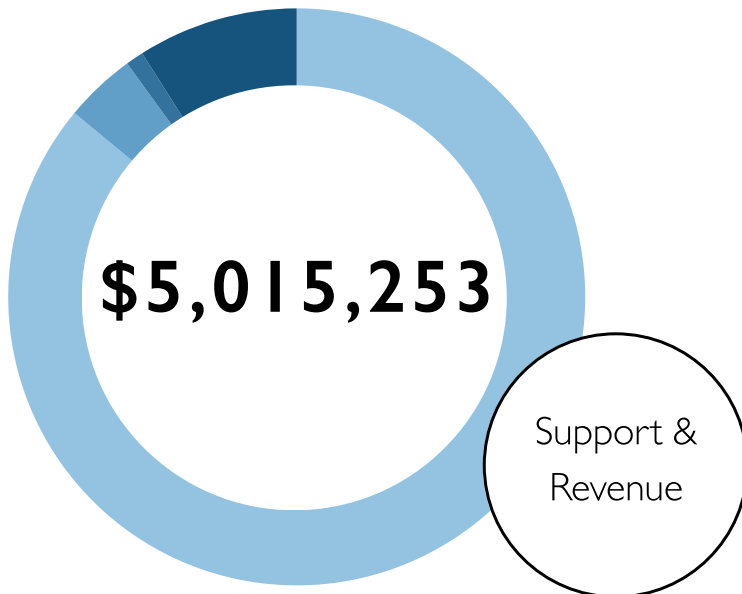
The children received holiday gifts from an Angel Tree toy drive with Taylorsville High School in December of 2023



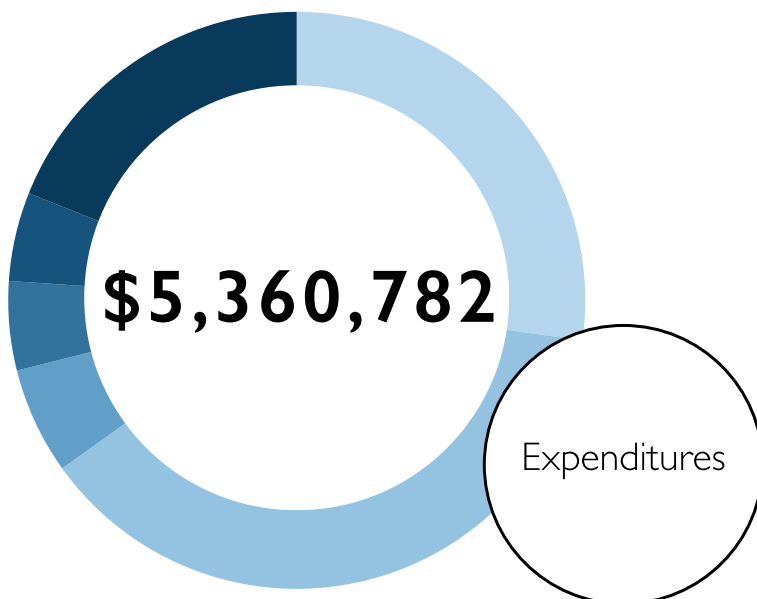
# FINANCIALS

*Fiscal year ending June 30, 2024*

- Contracts - 86%
- Grants - 4%
- Contributions - 1%
- Other - 9%



- Care About Childcare - 27%
- Family Support Services - 38%
- Building Blocks - 6%
- Fundraising - 5%
- Management and General - 5%
- ECCSG - 19%



## NET ASSETS

Beginning  
of the year

**\$1,301,055**

End  
of the year

**\$955,526**

## NET CHANGE

**-\$345,529**

The most recent audited financials for the Children's Society of Utah may be obtained at [cssutah.org](http://cssutah.org) or upon contacting Children's Service Society of Utah. Children's Service Society of Utah is registered as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. Our tax identification number is 87-0212451.



# Your *kindness*

## made this possible!



With deepest appreciation to our donors, partners, and community supporters.

## CSS DONORS

Anonymous  
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Gayle Wyner

Connect with us at [cssutah.org](http://cssutah.org), on social media @CSSUtah, or by phone 801-355-7444.







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Society of Utah**

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**Children's Service Society of Utah**

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[www.cssutah.org](http://www.cssutah.org)