

**2005 STATE OF THE CHILD
IN CENTRAL OHIO**



Children face an almost endless array of challenges. Drugs. Gangs. Violence. Depression. The list goes on and on. However, for the 2005 State of the Child, we have focused our attention on the sensitive topics of family violence, child neglect, child abuse, and sexual abuse.

Here are the numbers.

Nearly **900,000** U.S. children are victims of abuse and/or neglect each year.¹

Ohio ranked **3rd worst** in the nation for number of children who were victims of abuse or neglect.¹

One in three girls and **one in six** boys will be sexually victimized by the age of 18.²

Both male and female prison inmates are **twice** as likely as members of the general population to have been physically or sexually abused as a child.⁴

1. US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.
2. The Future of Children "Current Information of the Scope of Sexual Abuse" by Davis Finkelhor.
3. Franklin County Children Services.
4. US Bureau of Justice Statistics.
5. The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse.
6. Domestic Violence Manual for Judges, Washington State Gender and Justice Commission.

But these are just the numbers. And no matter how shocking these numbers might be, they don't give you a true picture of the frightening realities faced by children from every neighborhood, ethnic background, and economic level.

To even begin to understand what these children live through, you need to go beyond the numbers. You need to look at the children. You need to get inside their lives, minds, and hearts. You need to be aware of their anger, fears, and hopes.

No matter how difficult some of the following stories may be to read or even imagine, they will hopefully provide you with additional insight into the challenges facing far too many of our children.

Each year, approximately **5,000** children live in protective placement through Franklin County Children Services.³

Between **30% and 50%** of homes where the mother is being abused, the children are also being physically or sexually abused.⁶

Girls who have been abused are **twice** as likely to smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs than those who were not abused.⁵

Over **80%** of abusive husbands grew up in violent homes.⁶

THIS IS THE 2005 STATE OF THE CHILD IN CENTRAL OHIO

When you have finished reading the State of the Child, please pass it on to a friend, neighbor, or co-worker. Thank you.



MICHELLE

1997

Michelle, age 11, is sexually abused by her father.

1999

Michelle comes to her mother with stories of sexual abuse. Mother refuses to believe the stories.

Father stops sexually abusing Michelle.

2000

Michelle starts first serious relationship with a boyfriend, 4 years older than Michelle.

Boyfriend becomes extremely possessive and controlling of Michelle.

Michelle's mother raises concerns about boyfriend's behavior. Michelle becomes upset with mother and asks why she wasn't there to protect her when she really needed it.

2001

Michelle becomes pregnant.
At first, boyfriend denies baby is his,
but eventually admits that it is.

Michelle gives birth to healthy baby girl.

2002

Boyfriend learns of previous
sexual abuse and becomes even
more possessive of Michelle.

Michelle and boyfriend get into fight
because boyfriend sees Michelle talking
to a man on the front porch when he
comes back from store. Arguing leads to
punching, Michelle's father throws
boyfriend out of house, and Michelle
ends relationship with boyfriend.

2003

Michelle starts dating boyfriend again.
Parents protest, but to no avail.

2004

Michelle moves out of parents'
house and moves in with boyfriend.

Michelle questions boyfriend about
how much time he spends alone
with their daughter behind closed
doors. Boyfriend becomes irate,
blames caseworker for putting these
ideas in Michelle's head, kicks
caseworker out of house, and prohibits
Michelle from seeing caseworker again.

Michelle's phone number is disconnected,
and the apartment is empty the next time
Michelle's caseworker comes to visit.

2005

Neither Michelle's parents
nor her caseworker has heard
from Michelle in over 8 months.

***Last year, Directions For Youth & Families
helped 96 girls with the challenges of
teenage parenthood.***

What is the worst thing your mother ever said to you?

She used to say, "The dog is better than you."

And she didn't just say it once; she said it all the time.

Do you think she believed that to be true?

Well, she never hit the dog. She never made the dog eat oatmeal with worms in it. She even let the dog up on the couch. So, yeah, I guess maybe she did think the dog was better than me.

Are you saying your mother didn't let you sit on the couch?

She'd always say I wasn't a real member of the family. It was OK for my half-sisters to sit on the couch, but I wasn't allowed. Mom always favored my little sisters. It's not like she's a great parent to them, but at least she doesn't hit them.

Did she hit you frequently?

It wasn't like she hit me every day. But it was more than just a few times. And when she did hit me, she'd hit me in places where no one would see the bruises. Who would see the bruises on my breasts? No one.

Where was your father during all of this?

He wanted me to come live with him, but my mother wouldn't let me go because she knew it made Dad mad for her to have that control. And when Dad tried to get custody of me, the people at children services wouldn't let him. They said I was getting good grades and there was no proof that my mother was hitting me.

Do you still earn good grades at school?

I've almost always been on the honor roll, and I take AP classes when I can. The only times I haven't gotten really good grades have been when I had to switch schools too often. There was one year when I went to four different schools. But I'm still on schedule to graduate on time, and I am going to college. I've already been accepted to the college I want to attend, and between scholarships and my job, I've got it figured out how I'll be able to afford it.

Why did you go to four schools in one year?

Well, we moved once because we were evicted from our apartment. Then I moved in with my grandmother, but that didn't really work. So, I went to live with my aunt for the last couple months of the school year.

Where do you live now?

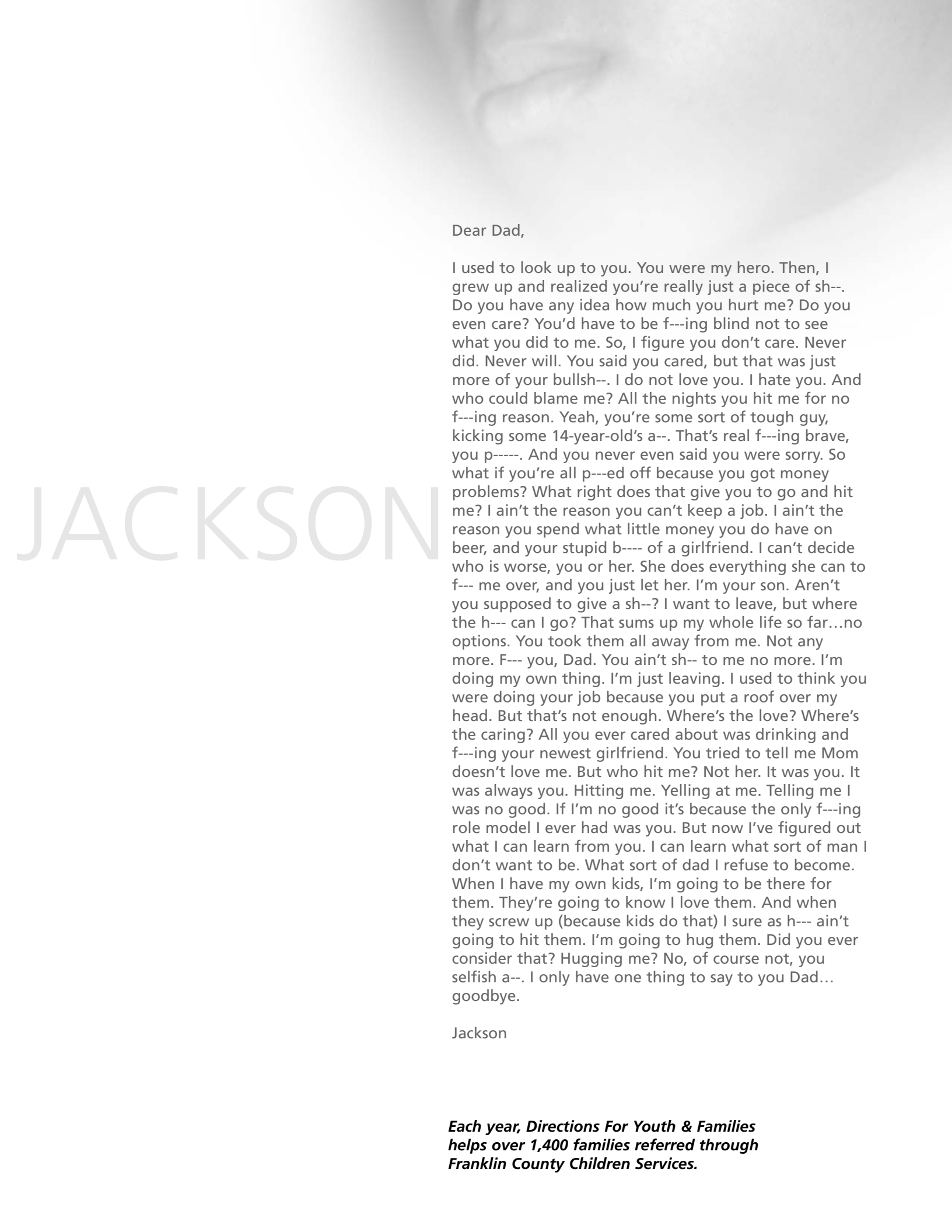
I'm emancipated. I have a little apartment for right now.

If you could say one thing to your mother, what would it be?

You controlled that part of my life. I'll control the next part. When I have kids, I'll make sure they know that someone loves them.

Since 2002, Directions For Youth & Families has helped over 11,000 Central Ohio children in their homes, schools, and communities.

TINA



Dear Dad,

I used to look up to you. You were my hero. Then, I grew up and realized you're really just a piece of sh--. Do you have any idea how much you hurt me? Do you even care? You'd have to be f---ing blind not to see what you did to me. So, I figure you don't care. Never did. Never will. You said you cared, but that was just more of your bullsh--. I do not love you. I hate you. And who could blame me? All the nights you hit me for no f---ing reason. Yeah, you're some sort of tough guy, kicking some 14-year-old's a--. That's real f---ing brave, you p-----. And you never even said you were sorry. So what if you're all p---ed off because you got money problems? What right does that give you to go and hit me? I ain't the reason you can't keep a job. I ain't the reason you spend what little money you do have on beer, and your stupid b---- of a girlfriend. I can't decide who is worse, you or her. She does everything she can to f--- me over, and you just let her. I'm your son. Aren't you supposed to give a sh--? I want to leave, but where the h--- can I go? That sums up my whole life so far...no options. You took them all away from me. Not any more. F--- you, Dad. You ain't sh-- to me no more. I'm doing my own thing. I'm just leaving. I used to think you were doing your job because you put a roof over my head. But that's not enough. Where's the love? Where's the caring? All you ever cared about was drinking and f---ing your newest girlfriend. You tried to tell me Mom doesn't love me. But who hit me? Not her. It was you. It was always you. Hitting me. Yelling at me. Telling me I was no good. If I'm no good it's because the only f---ing role model I ever had was you. But now I've figured out what I can learn from you. I can learn what sort of man I don't want to be. What sort of dad I refuse to become. When I have my own kids, I'm going to be there for them. They're going to know I love them. And when they screw up (because kids do that) I sure as h--- ain't going to hit them. I'm going to hug them. Did you ever consider that? Hugging me? No, of course not, you selfish a--. I only have one thing to say to you Dad... goodbye.

Jackson

Each year, Directions For Youth & Families helps over 1,400 families referred through Franklin County Children Services.



JIMMY

We moved around a lot. But the last time Mom and Dad moved, they didn't take us with them. They left us here with Becky, our babysitter. My sisters act like everything is OK now, but it's not. We don't have a Mom and Dad anymore. But maybe that is OK. I hated them anyway. But it's not fair. Why don't I have a regular family?

JIMMY, RACHÉL & KAREN



KAREN

I figured if I did everything they wanted me to do, they'd leave Rachel and Jimmy alone. So, I'd wait outside my bedroom after Rachel and Jimmy went to bed, and when Bill would open their bedroom door, I'd go on in. Sometimes, I'd just have to watch. And sometimes, Mom would watch. I knew it wasn't right, but I didn't know what else to do. I was trying to protect my little brother and sister.



RACHEL

Jimmy might call him Dad, but he's not our dad. He's Bill. Our dad left when Jimmy was only two. Bill was our dad's best friend, but when dad took off, Bill still kept coming around. Whenever we moved to a new city, they'd try to make everyone think we were a regular family. But to be a regular family, Mom and Bill would have to be regular people. Regular people don't take showers with their teenage daughters. Regular people don't talk about sex at the dinner table with their kids. Regular people don't have sex on the couch while their kids are trying to watch TV. Regular people don't do what I saw Bill doing to Jimmy the night before I told Becky about everything. Regular people don't just leave town one day while their kids are at the babysitter's.

In 2004, Directions For Youth & Families helped 123 boys and girls who had been sexually abused.

"You just stay here with your grandma and grandpa for a couple weeks. I'll be back to get you as soon as I kick this drug thing and get my act together."

The last words Billy ever heard his mother say.

"They love you. They just have other things they need to take care of right now."

The hollow words Billy's grandparents would say when Billy was feeling depressed.

"Good game, son. I knew you'd be a superstar. I just knew it."

The first words Billy's dad said to him in over three years.

BILLY

"You could be our starting point guard, maybe even as a freshman."

The types of words Billy regularly heard from college basketball coaches.

"Step out of the car with your hands where we can see them."

The words Billy heard when he and three of his friends were pulled over in a stolen car.

"We're not sure we still have a scholarship to offer you."

The words Billy heard from the one college coach for whom Billy most wanted to play.

"I'll give you one more chance. But you have to prove to me that you've changed, on the court and in the classroom."

The words of Billy's high school coach before the start of his senior year.

"I knew you could do it."

The first words out of his grandmother's mouth when Billy showed her his SAT scores.

"Thank you." The only words Billy could think to say when offered a basketball scholarship by one of the few college coaches who hadn't given up on him.

Last year, Directions For Youth & Families helped over 1,100 high-risk teenagers stay in school and out of the juvenile court system.

Mommy wanted us to have a better life.
That's why she was going back to school.

Daddy thought she was turning
her back on him.

That's why he stabbed her.

That's about all I know about my
Mommy and Daddy. I don't remember
much. I was only 4. I remember the
funeral. And I remember having to pack
our stuff into Uncle Joe's van so we
could all move in with Granny and
Pappy. Granny and Pappy used to have
this nice yellow house. I liked to play
in the basement. But then we had to
move to this place. My sister said it was
because Granny and Pappy can't
afford to take care of all 5 of us kids.

I wish Granny and Pappy still
had their house.

It was pretty.

I wish I still had my Mommy.
She was pretty, too.

People say that my sister looks a lot like
Mommy. But I don't think so. My sister
never smiles. She yells a lot. She yells at
me. She yells at Granny and Pappy. And
she yelled at the police when they were
here last week. Sometimes, I yell a lot
too. I yelled at my teacher yesterday.
I got into a lot of trouble. Then, Granny
and Pappy yelled at me. There is always
a lot of yelling. And a lot of crying.
Sometimes, I cry because I'm sad.
Sometimes, because I'm mad. I hear
Granny crying sometimes too. And
even my brothers.

If only Mommy was here.

Then, there wouldn't be all this yelling.

If only Mommy was here.

Then, there wouldn't be all this crying.



SAGE

***In 2004, Directions For Youth &
Families helped 35 children of
murdered parents or siblings.***



Mommy loves me,
and she doesn't
hit me very often,
only when I make
her mad. If I didn't
make her mad, she
probably wouldn't
hit me. That's how
it always happens. I
forget to pick up
my shoes, or I talk
during her favorite
TV show, or I spill
my orange juice at
breakfast. And now,
Mommy's really
mad at me because
it's my fault the
lady from the
county is coming
around all the time.
I didn't mean to
get Mommy into
trouble. I was just
asking my teacher
a question.

Is it wrong for
a mommy to hit
her daughter for
not eating her
vegetables?

Why did Miss
Stegner have
to tell the police?


I didn't even say
Mommy hit me,
and it's not like she
does it all the time.

ASHLEY

No one
understands.

They all think
Mommy doesn't
love me. She does.
It's just like two
years ago when
they took my
brother away. I
don't want them to
take me away too. I
love Mommy. She
loves me. I don't
want to go live with
some other family.
I won't know them.
They won't love
me, not like
Mommy does.

***In 2004, Directions For Youth & Families
helped 638 children who were physically
or emotionally abused.***



Her cries will break your heart. You want to help her, but she lashes out at you. Punching. Kicking. Screaming. Using words no 4-year-old girl should ever hear, let alone say.

She misses her father, and she blames her mother. She doesn't know any better. She doesn't understand where her father is, or even why jails exist. She can't comprehend what Shaken Baby Syndrome is. She doesn't realize that it's her father's fault that her baby brother has irreversible brain damage. She doesn't understand that a lot of things her father did were wrong. She's 4 years old. She loves her daddy.

EMMA

It's normal for a child to miss her father, but not like this. A child isn't supposed to curl up in their father's blue jeans to fall asleep. A 4-year-old isn't supposed to wait by the front window, day after day, waiting for her daddy to come home. A daughter isn't supposed to hit her mother just for saying she loves the girl's father.

But you can see the hints of progress. You realize that she doesn't hit her brother or sister anymore. You are proud of her for learning her ABCs and counting to 100. You can start to understand why she still screams at her mother for letting the police take Daddy away. And you can almost forgive the violent outbursts any time someone sits in Daddy's chair. It's not right for her to be this violent. And it's not fair to the rest of the family. But neither are the things that have happened to her.

In 2004, Directions For Youth & Families helped 276 children prepare both emotionally and developmentally for kindergarten.



You've just read eight stories of abuse, neglect, violence, heartache, pain, disappointment, success, fear, and hope.

These are just eight stories, but they represent thousands of area children who are currently facing these same challenges. Thousands of children who need help breaking the cycle of violence. Thousands of children who need a little direction in their lives.

And it's only with the help of people like you that organizations such as Directions For Youth & Families can help these children.

PLEASE HELP

To learn how you, your family, your organization, or your business can help Directions For Youth & Families, please call 614-294-2661 or visit www.dfyf.org.

To help children and families throughout central Ohio, Directions For Youth & Families provides both prevention and treatment programs.

These programs help children with behavioral problems, alcohol and drug addictions, and a history of domestic violence.

They help children make mature decisions about sex and pregnancy, dispute resolution, and criminal activity.

They include programs for children who have been the victims of physical and sexual abuse, who have witnessed acts of violence, who have lost a loved one to homicide, and who have given birth to children while still being children themselves.

These programs also help children understand the importance of tolerance, appreciation for differences, abstinence, respect, self-esteem, responsibility, making the right choices, and hard work.

As a result of the efforts of the volunteers and staff at Directions For Youth & Families, Franklin County has saved millions of dollars in reduced costs of prosecution, incarceration, property loss, and child welfare.

More importantly, however, thousands of area youth have received the direction their lives so badly needed.



STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004

Total # of clients served in FY 2004:	5,929
Early Childhood/Parenting:	921
Treatment:	3,319
Prevention/Education (incl. Short Stop):	2,357

Revenues

Government	\$4,512,019
United Way	1,421,081
Contributions	239,090
Fees for Services	91,715
Investment Income	15,033
Rental & Miscellaneous	14,474
Management Fees	271,833
TOTAL	\$6,565,245

Expenses

Program	\$5,695,417
Support Services	
Management & General	471,432
Fundraising	197,895
TOTAL	6,364,744
<i>Surplus</i>	\$200,501 *

* Surplus of revenues over expenses is comprised of capital pledges and other contributions.



The stories told in this document are based on actual events that have occurred in the lives of clients of Directions For Youth & Families. The identities have been altered to protect the children and their families.

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Directions For Youth & Families would like to thank these groups for making the State of the Child possible:

