

# 2016



## EVERYDAY HEROES

SHELTERING ARMS 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

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Children and Family Services

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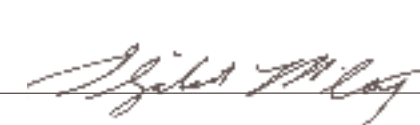
# EVERYDAY HEROES

It's no coincidence that so many of the caped superheroes of legend are New Yorkers. Our city is tough, and it has tested children and families alike for generations – from refugees of war and famine arriving at Ellis Island to children of the crack epidemic rising above trauma. All of them have found hope and help in our Sheltering Arms community.

From the ashes of those battles against poverty and inequity, heroes have risen. You've been there with us to celebrate their victories since our founding in 1831, making sure that deserving New Yorkers have the fighting chance to succeed in school, jobs, and their communities. Your support is what keeps our children and families going, inspired by the knowledge that they have champions on their side. They count you among their greatest heroes.

In the following pages, you'll meet a few more of your fellow champions. They are our volunteers, our staff, our children and our families. They are everyday New Yorkers whose stories of survival and success, resilience and results, prove that any change is possible when we strive together for a more equitable city for all.

As our children and families beat the odds in surprising numbers, we know they will give back in turn, as active citizens and bright innovators. We look forward to introducing you to this next generation of heroes and sharing in the benefits of their leadership.



**ELIZABETH M<sup>C</sup>CARTHY**

*Chief Executive Officer*



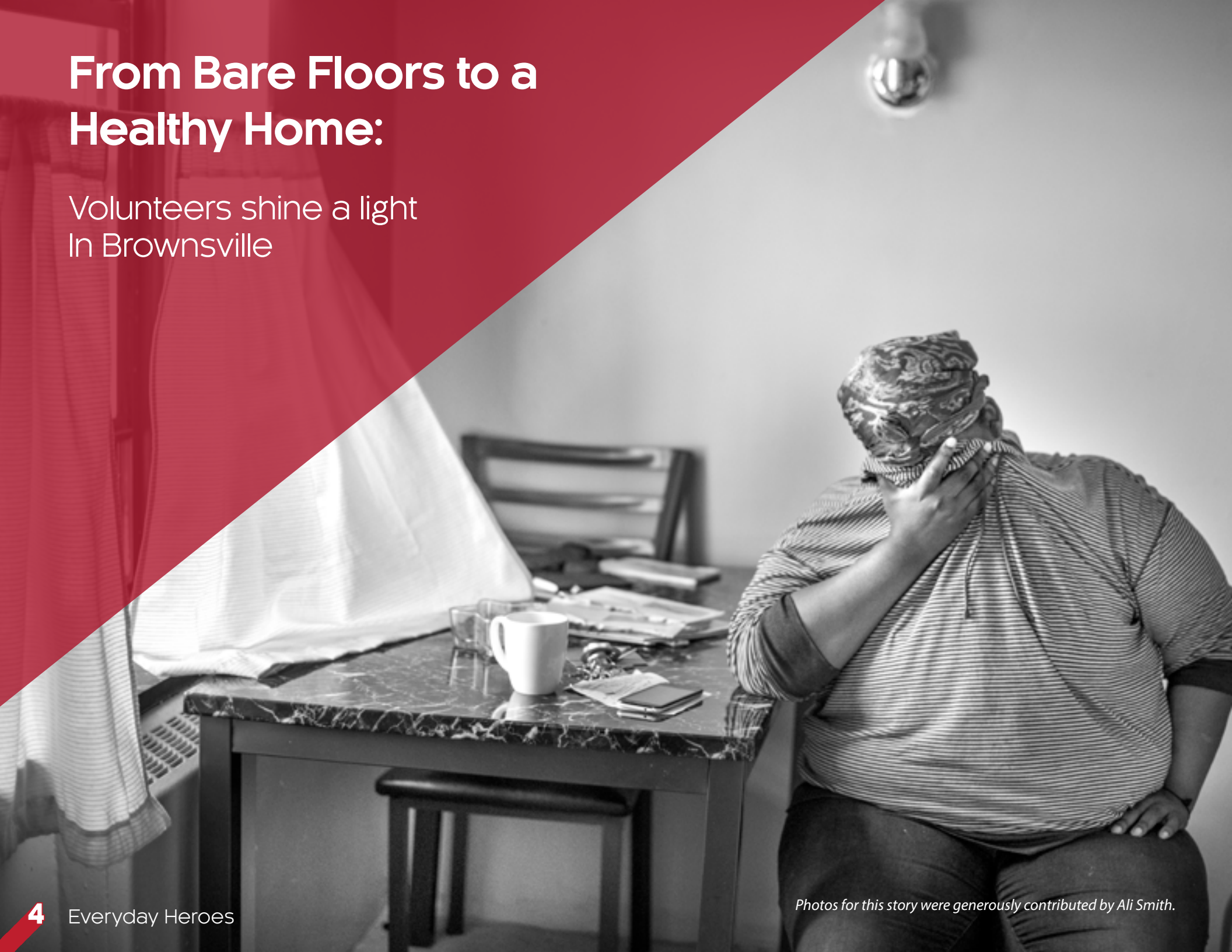
**KENNETH M. KRAMER**

*Chairman, Board of Directors*

*Photographers Kelly Campbell and Ali Smith have generously donated photos for this report. The Berman Group has generously contributed graphic design.*

# From Bare Floors to a Healthy Home:

Volunteers shine a light  
In Brownsville



Photos for this story were generously contributed by Ali Smith.

For Rachelle\*, childbirth wasn't miraculous. It wasn't exhilarating. It wasn't a treasured moment surrounded by proud parents or a partner cheering her on. As her heart rate dropped dangerously low, she feared that she might not survive at all. Her healthy newborn son was carried away while she was given a series of blood transfusions to save her life. As a single 19-year-old in foster care, Rachelle was filled with dread over the possibility that she wouldn't be there to care for her son, the same way her mom couldn't be there to encourage and protect her.

Rachelle's mom was killed when she was nine. "It's hard for me to talk about it. Even just a few years ago, I wouldn't talk to anyone," she says. She has a daily reminder of her beloved mother each time she looks in the mirror. A photo of Rachelle's mom on her cell phone is almost indistinguishable from pictures of Rachelle herself.

"When my mom was taken from me, I went to live with *that lady*," she says, referring to her great aunt who abused her badly. She won't even invoke the woman's name. "That was the worst day of my life."

Even though Rachelle despises the way she was treated by her great aunt, she still struggles to let go of the idea that she is partly responsible for the abuse she endured. "I wouldn't say I was a bad kid, but I was hardened. I would act out because the kids used to bully me in my new school. They would make fun of me because I was one of the only African-American students. My great aunt believed in a certain way of disciplining kids and I was giving her hell." Rachelle was going through hell, and instead of comforting her and advocating for her, her guardians abused her.

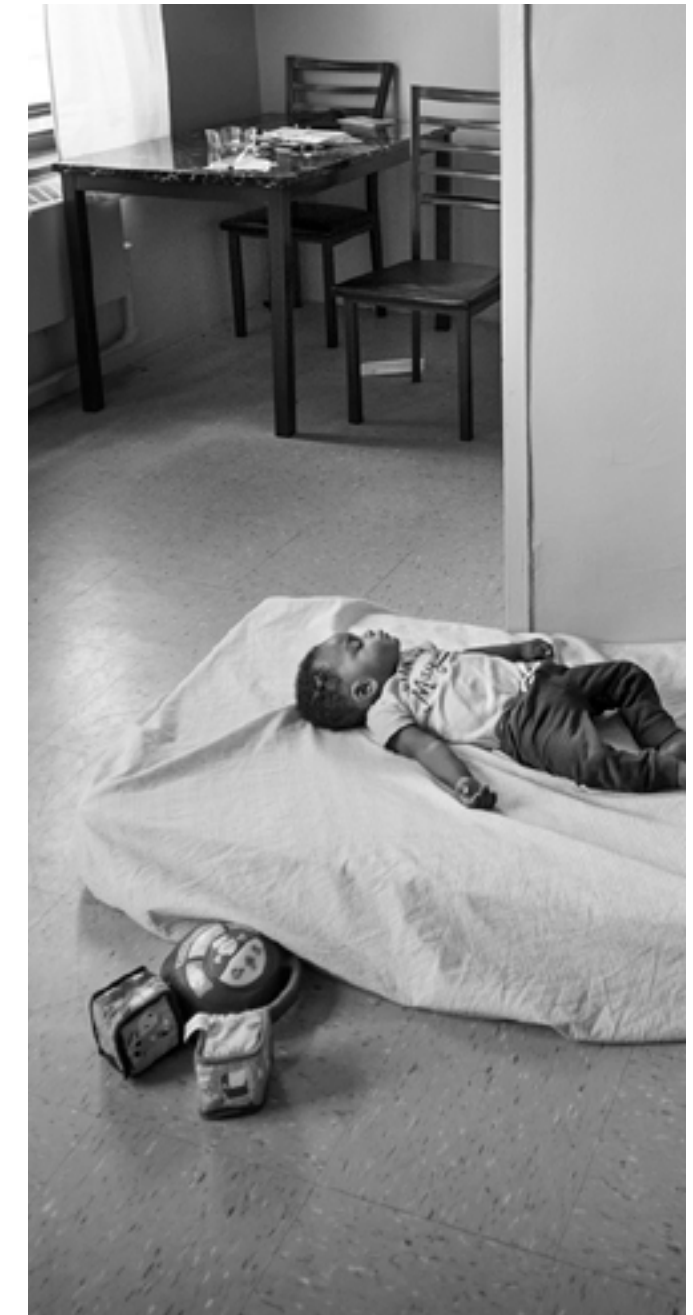
"I decided I couldn't take it anymore. I went to the school and told the social worker. Even the social worker started crying because she saw that one of my cuts was bleeding badly. My aunt had been angry, so she had beaten me with an extension cord. They had to call an ambulance because my eye was swollen shut. I was bruised and cut up. In the hospital I was treated for a lesion on my arm and cuts on my head. I was physically battered, but I had finally broken free."

Rachelle liked the foster home where she lived when she first joined the Sheltering Arms program, but she moved into her own space when she became pregnant with her son Zair\*.

"I really don't like this place," she says, gesturing at the barren living room of her Brownsville public housing unit. "When I first came to view the apartment, it was disgusting. My oven wasn't working. My sink was leaking. The toilet was broken. I have a window in my room that's broken." The cement floors are covered with thin linoleum. It's easy to see since she has no living room furniture to cover it, no changing table, no rug. "I can't afford a couch or even a crib," she says, listing furniture staples that most families count among their basic possessions. She points out the open windows which don't have shades. She worries that the fumes from her neighbors' drug use will waft into her home.

Now nine months old, Zair crawls around and naps on a mattress on the floor in the otherwise empty room. Signs downstairs warn about asbestos abatement and lead paint cover-ups. The Brownsville neighborhood where her apartment is located makes headlines for exceptionally high rates of gun violence and poverty. According to The Citizens' Committee for Children, infants are three times more likely to die before their first birthday in Brownsville than infants in Borough Park, an affluent neighborhood.

In spite of it all, Zair is beating the odds so far. "The pediatrician says he's above average in every area of health and development," says Rachelle, though she worries that the bar is set low for babies like hers, given how many babies in the neighborhood are born with developmental disadvantages from poverty, poor education, poor health, or other risk factors affecting their parents. Zair is a social baby, smiling and laughing at strangers. He turns to the sound of his mom's voice in the other room like a sunflower turns to face the sun. He doesn't cry and goes right to sleep when it's naptime.





Sheltering Arms is also helping Rachelle advance her economic mobility so she can be a stable provider for her family, independent of any public assistance. Through our Preparing Youth for Adulthood program, she is signed up to earn her high school equivalency at a site which she chose for its proximity to a home health aide training center. Her social worker is helping her find day care for Zair so she can attend both the education and the vocational training centers simultaneously. After she builds her resume as a home health aide, she wants to train to become a nurse.

Despite Rachelle's aspirations and Zair's sunny disposition, they're no match for systemic inequality by themselves. Brownsville is plagued by pervasive challenges: high infant mortality rates, poor mental health, dropout rates, crimes rates, and other environmental symptoms of social inequality. Worse still, moms like Rachelle are often blamed for the poor outcomes of their children which result from generational poverty. Whether they accept public assistance or not, poor, single moms are accused of bringing poverty on themselves, even though they take on parenting without so many of the support systems and privileges their critics enjoyed as children and as parents.

The rhetoric about alleged "welfare queens" has infiltrated the political sphere and had a serious impact on funding for resources for Rachelle – from mental health services to job development, and from early education for Zair to basic furniture for her home. While the debates rage on over public spending for child welfare and public assistance, children suffer. In New York State, several politicians have proposed cutting or withholding funding from New York's Administration for Children's Services (ACS) until the agency can improve outcomes and eliminate instances of abuse and neglect. But underfunding child welfare programs is neglect. You only have to look at Rachelle's empty home to know that the standard provisions for moms in foster care aren't enough for them or their children to be healthy and successful.

That's where Joy and Barb come in. Joy is in advertising and her mom, Barb, is a retired nurse. "Now that we're retired, we're able to give more of ourselves and our time. We want to set an example

for our retired friends of how we can be involved in a hands-on way, a way that you can make an immediate impact and meet people where they are," says Barb of her and her husband's unique volunteer partnership with Sheltering Arms.

"Hands-on" is an understatement. Joy, Barb, Craig, their family friend Ben, and even Joy's children, came together to outfit Rachelle's apartment with everything she needs to create a healthy home for Zair. They corresponded with her to pick out a toddler bed, a dish set, and more. Driving up from Pennsylvania, they filled a minivan so completely with new furniture and supplies that it was impossible to see through any of the windows besides the windshield. They built shelving, a couch, and recliner, hung curtains, and filled cupboards with toys and books. They even brought light bulbs and lights, and pots and pans, and cleaning supplies, the way any family with the means to do it would help their child set up her first apartment.

At a time when our society is more divided than ever by class, race, and gender, Sheltering Arms is transcending these divisions and building bridges between youth in need and everyday citizens who can help. Though they come from an entirely different background, Joy, Barb, and their families were able to close a funding gap for the things Rachelle and Zair need. In doing so, they helped restore the kind of personal affection and care that was stripped from Rachelle when she lost her mom a decade earlier.

"We got the desk so you can study when you're in nursing school," said Joy, showing Rachelle some of the surprises they had installed in the apartment. "One day Zair can do his homework here too." As a retired nurse, Barb vowed to support Rachelle in any way she needs when she gets to nursing school.

Surveying her new home, Rachelle's eyes filled with tears. "Now I don't have to feel embarrassed of where I live," she said. "It feels good to have their support because I haven't been able to cover everything on my own. I haven't known what it feels like to have someone care what happens to me. I feel like Zair and I are home now."

*\*Names have been changed to protect privacy.*



# Risen from the Ashes

Out of the pit of poverty, Raul builds bridges to safety & success for children like him



*\*This story is told as Raul remembers it, based on his recollections of events.*

## Born into Poverty

"I grew up inside the system," says Raul, one of the Coordinators for teens in our Foster Care program. Like many of the youth who enter our programs, Raul was born into a cycle of poverty, abuse, and neglect. "From the age of two to 21, I was in foster care. I've been through a lot of homes. I've been through mental institutions, residential treatment centers, group homes, and then slowly went downhill to juvenile jails and prison."

His childhood constants were starvation and abuse. He began as a toddler in crisis, and the systems that should have protected and supported him fell short, or worse, punished him for the accident of his birth. Far from exceptional, Raul's story reflects a struggle that is all too familiar to black and Latino boys growing up in poverty.

"Just picture a three bedroom apartment on the Lower East Side. You have four adults and over nine kids living in the home, so there were constant battles," he says. By battles, Raul means that the adults in the home would abuse the children, beating them for playing the TV too loudly when others in the crowded apartment were napping, for being extra mouths to feed, and for fighting back however they could.

Raul and his five siblings were left in the care of his aunts when he was a toddler. His mother was living on the streets. His aunts, victims of sexual abuse, were self-medicating with drugs and verbally abusing the children. When Raul was seven, he fought back against particularly violent abuse at the hands of his cousin by lighting a bed on fire in the house. His aunts kicked him out, prompting his placement in a foster home at another agency.

"That's when I was severely abused," remembers Raul. Though it's hard to imagine that his earlier abuse wasn't severe, the spectrum for Raul is distorted by extremes which few people can imagine.

"Punishments started slowly, from screaming and yelling, to pulling my hair, to smacking, to punching, to getting hit with belts. I've been hit with belts, extension cords, hangers.... I'd say I got immune to the physical abuse, but the mental abuse was what broke me."

Raul says his foster mother lied to his teachers and his foster care agency to conceal her abuse. When he was 10, he stood up to her the only way he knew how. "I told her, 'You're not my mother!' She picked my little body up, brought me into the kitchen, moved the rice and beans that was on the electric stove, the kind of stove with the coils that turn red when they're hot, and pressed my whole face on the burner." She told Raul that worse things were in store for him if he spoke up about the abuse. If he stayed quiet, she'd let him go. The child psychologists tried to get Raul to open up, but the choice was an easy one for him. He stayed quiet.

## Stealing to Survive

After a brief stint in a group home, Raul was back with his aunts who realized they could be paid to be his foster parents. As Raul recalls, they had sunk deeper into cocaine dependency and needed the money to feed their habit. "At first, we had a piece of bread to eat in the morning and then dinner, but if you tried to have two servings at dinner, my aunt would be verbally abusive. In that environment, you become discouraged from eating food, and that was when we had food to eat. Slowly, my aunt started hiding the food inside her room, for her son. She was giving her son clothes and sniffing coke with my foster care money. My brothers and I always had a joke that our aunts only provided water for us, but not food, just enough so we wouldn't die. But that's all she really had in her fridge: a gallon of water and a box of baking soda, to give the illusion of cleanliness instead of destitution."

Without food, or another place to live, Raul and his brothers were starving. Raul describes how they turned to crime to appease their stomachs and their abusive aunts. "When I robbed someone, I didn't keep the money for myself. I would give some of it to my aunt to make her feel happy. I'm not sure if you know the habit of a cocaine addict, but they are angry and irritable until they get their fix. Even knowing she was using the money for drugs, I did it because it made life bearable in that environment."

School became another symbol of his helplessness, and the site of one of the worst experiences in his life. "I got a call in the middle of school. I was told over the phone, 'Hey, your mother's dead.' She contracted HIV before going to prison and died when I was 15. I remember seeing the body." Good grades might have spared Raul longer sentences and harsher punishments for his criminal behavior, but like food and housing, good grades were beyond his reach.

Next: A stint in an alternative incarceration program for juveniles. He did well at first until Raul was put on punishment for allegedly smoking cigarettes.

"I hadn't been smoking, but the staff weren't hearing it. They claimed they could smell it on my hands." Raul's punishment was to wear an outfit of moldy, mildew-covered clothing for a day. "That wasn't considered abusive back then." Rather than suffer the indignity for something he insists he didn't do, Raul ran away, becoming an instant target for police.

*"My brothers and I always had a joke that our aunts only provided water for us, but not food, just enough so we wouldn't die. But that's all she really had in her fridge: a gallon of water and a box of baking soda, to give the illusion of cleanliness instead of destitution."*

## Punishment for Poverty

"I was on the run in New York City, and I needed money to survive, so I started selling drugs in exchange for a room in a crack fiend's house." His tumultuous childhood made this frightening experience feel normal. He started doing time in an adult prison for the first time when he was caught for selling drugs. "I take responsibility for the things I did. I did rob people and I'm very regretful for that, but there were a lot of things that contributed to it." He could only wonder what might've been if he grew up under different circumstances.

On Riker's Island, what might have been a short stint for a 16 year-old youth who had never known stability, security, or a full stomach, spiraled out of control. He fell into a violent and increasingly severe six-year period of incarceration in maximum security prisons and solitary confinement. Less than a year has passed since New York became the 49th state to raise the age of criminal responsibility to 18, in part because of the torture and eventual suicide of prisoners like Kalief Browder, held in solitary confinement on Riker's without trial for allegedly stealing a backpack. He was cleared of the crime when it was too late.

Today, Raul likely wouldn't have gone to Riker's at all. He would have had another chance to turn his life around and gain the skills to succeed—without relying on crime—in a home like one of the residential juvenile justice homes Sheltering Arms operates. He would have been treated for more than a decade of severe abuse in one of our mental health facilities. But many of the laws that protect young people of color emerged after Raul's imprisonment.

In another bizarre twist of fate, Raul was on Riker's at the same time as his older brother, who convinced him to throw himself in solitary confinement on purpose - just so he could "live" next to his brother. He recalls how he broke a piece of metal off of the radiator and went through the metal detector, and reunited with his brother in the adjacent cell. For someone with so little semblance of family, even committing a punishable infraction was worth it to be near his brother.

Unlike defendants outside of prison, those who allegedly commit infractions in prison have no right to fair trial or legal representation. Makeshift courts pitted Correctional Officers (COs) against inmates and resulted in what Raul describes as increasingly perverse punishments. One sanction would beget another, as often, the only "crime" was being in solitary confinement in the first place. "They perceive you as a threat for just being there," says Raul. Though the uniform was sometimes the only thing separating violent COs from violent inmates, the uniform conferred moral superiority, and COs argued that the inmates deserved abuse or else they wouldn't be there.

## Solitary Confinement and Other Euphemisms for Torture

"Just imagine this: You're locked up 23 hours per day in solitary confinement. You are supposed to go to recreation or to the library for an hour. What if the COs don't feel like bringing you out? You're stuck there 24 hours per day."

Raul starts every part of his story with "Imagine..." before describing some other-worldly scenario prisoners endured. He knows that most readers must plumb the depths of their imaginations to picture what he has gone through. His intros imply that his audience has to imagine, since they can't possibly identify with him from shared experiences. We don't even speak the same language. Imagine going through life, as Raul does, with the burden of misunderstanding, where your every life experience has to be constantly justified, explained, and believed before any dialogue or collaboration can begin based on a shared set of facts.

*"I take responsibility for the things I did. I did rob people and I'm very regretful for that, but there were a lot of things that contributed to it."*

"Imagine: You're agitated because you've been locked up for 24 hours a day in your cell. If a CO perceives that you're giving him a problem, like if you need medical attention, which requires a CO to do more work, he's going to make life harder for you. They can deny you food. They can let other inmates into the shower to attack you, even though there's only supposed to be one person in the shower at a time in solitary. Or, from the control tower, they can pop open two cells while you're sleeping so the other person can attack you. It happened like that." To this day, the grating noise and the clang of the remote control prison gate haunt Raul's dreams.

Sheltering Arms 2016 Annual Report

“Picture this: Riker’s Island has a special unit called the Emergency Response Unit (ERU Team), but we call them the turtles because they’re all dressed up in bullet proof armor, shields, masks, batons. Imagine you’re sleeping at night and then around 2:30 in the morning, you just hear your cell door crack open. That sound is traumatizing, the *rrrrmmmm-boom* of the door. Imagine you get up, and you see a man in robotic armor and a giant dog, because they have dogs that sniff for drugs. And then a CO tells you to strip down butt naked in front of him. You’re stripping, you’re also bending down, vulnerable, exposing yourself, coughing twice so they can make sure you don’t have drugs concealed in your anus. You have to show your thing, peel back the skin. There are little things like that which are inhumane. Then you have to be escorted out of the cell naked. Imagine you’re butt naked and cuffed behind the back and they link you standing on the line with all the other prisoners. The COs had a joke. They used to say, ‘I wanna see nuts and butts!’ Like, you have to be up on top of the person in front of you with your thing on the person’s backside, naked. That’s traumatizing.”

Sometimes it’s hard to separate the horrors Raul says he endured in various “correctional” facilities and the violence he endured at the hands of his abusers. “Sometimes the ERU team wants to be evil, just because you are in solitary confinement. When they search your cell, they rip up your pictures. They rip up your mail and refuse you the little contact that you have with the outside world. They throw your sheets in the toilet bowl. They cuff you and beat you with batons. If you try to fight back with just your feet, really, or your head, they would lift you up and ram you against a wall. Or on Riker’s, they have the metal detector before you step into the unit, so they just smash your elbows onto it. They deny you medical attention.” Raul says his brother’s beatings by COs were so violent that he has lesions on his brain and blindness in one eye.

The cycle of violence within prison, exacerbated by his brother’s behavior and his own gang membership, put him on track to a maximum security prison.

“They sentenced me to two years in solitary confinement. I spent every day there for two years.” Remember, Raul’s whole journey through the prison system was initially triggered by the phantom smell of cigarettes which Raul says he hadn’t been smoking, but which earned him an inhumane punishment and sent him running from juvenile detention and into the drug trade to survive. It might seem like a random chain of events that put a child in a supermax prison, but it’s a painfully common chain of events for kids in poverty, especially young men of color. Events that would be smoothed over for a white person or an affluent child, hardly worth remembering, spell doom for many Latino youth in poverty. Instead of becoming experts at their chosen fields, youth like Raul become experts in survival, and in dodging new and creative tortures in prison.

“There’s a punishment they called food deprivation, where they’d take away your meals and instead you would get a loaf of ‘bread’ which consisted of kitchen scraps that they didn’t want to use, formed into a nugget. So you have that small loaf of ‘bread’ and a small cup of cabbage for the day, no juice, no water, no nothing. Another punishment was called water deprivation. The CO is supposed to come around every three hours to turn on your pipes so you can use the bathroom and get water from your sink. But the COs don’t come. So you have to hold your defecation in. You have to make sure your toilet bowl is always clean because you have to drink toilet water. That’s beyond inhumane. It’s violating the Eighth Amendment. But that’s how it was.”

Right after Raul maxed out of prison, they introduced a Behavioral Health Unit for everyone who had been in solitary. So many people ended up hurting themselves or committing suicide that they had to create special mental health services for them. Raul, too, cut himself in solitary.

When he came before the Parole Board the first time, he explained his remorse and his commitment to change. “I told them I did rob people, but I was living in poverty and starving. That doesn’t negate the fact that I did do these crimes, and I’m remorseful for it. I remember the lady on the panel was like, ‘But you had four walls and roof.’”

Raul might have had a floor to sleep on, but four walls and a roof never fed him, clothed him,

taught him, or loved him, the way that any child would need to be in order to thrive. Worse still, those four walls and a roof had always been the sites of unimaginable pain and torture for Raul. What signifies safety, security, and home for people like the head of the Parole Board, confer imprisonment and agony for Raul.

Rebelling against his treatment in prison, two years in solitary turned into four. After serving the maximum sentence, Raul was given \$40 and a recommendation for a homeless shelter in upstate New York. “I only lasted one night in the shelter. Imagine being in solitary for all those years, and then you come out and you have so much stimulation, people moving around, loud noises. I felt like I was hallucinating. The panic attacks were debilitating. I still have flashbacks and I wake up screaming.” The “correctional facilities” had broken him and he was left to pick up the pieces.

### Building Bridges to Healing & Justice

Raul’s homecoming was as serendipitous as his flight from the city. “Do you remember what happened on August 14th, 2003? Because I remember it as clearly as if it happened yesterday. That was the best day of my life,” says Raul. The day Raul fled the homeless shelter after his release and headed back to New York was coincidentally the same day as the 2003 city-wide blackout. After evacuating from the subway, Raul had to walk from Brooklyn to 122nd Street and First Avenue in Harlem where his aunt lived. Because of the blackout, stores were handing out soda, ice cream, and food. “I felt like a king,” says Raul, as he describes his tour of the city, snacking on the free bounty from all the bodegas which had lost power.

In a bizarre way, the event was the opposite of the scenario that sent him to juvenile detention in the first place. The same stores he had robbed in desperation a decade earlier were now handing out limitless food to a starving, homeless youth. It was the first time anyone had ever given Raul food freely and not as a method of control or manipulation, or not as a grudging obligation.

No one had ever bought Raul an ice cream cone or thrown him a birthday party during his childhood. A free soda from a bodega was all it took to make Raul feel like a king. It was a hero’s welcome, foreshadowing what he would come to mean to some of the youth in our Foster Care and Juvenile Justice programs.

Today, Raul works for our Preparing Youth for Adulthood program, which supports foster youth in obtaining and flourishing in their careers, succeeding in school, and developing 21st Century skills. He helped us pioneer our mentored internship program, where youth learn job skills in structured internships at Sheltering Arms where they can build their professional skill sets among employees who understand their trauma and unique challenges. Two thirds of eligible youth in the program secured jobs or vocational programming in 2016, putting them on track for independence after they age out of the foster care system. The US Department of Health and Human Services found that fewer than 45% of foster youth age out of the system with any earnings. 47% of them are unemployed when they age out, but Raul’s cohort are beating those odds.

Raul had to fight his way out of the past and into a job where he could demonstrate his full potential. Because of his criminal record, he could only find temp work in three to four city maintenance jobs at a time, sleeping only two to four hours per night to support his wife and son. He was simultaneously paying tuition for a GED program and an Associate’s in Criminal Justice, followed by a Bachelor’s in Sociology. After writing a letter to the Sheltering Arms CEO, Raul secured a full time position that draws on his unique qualifications: his empathy for youth who have experienced severe poverty, abuse, and neglect; his ability to earn their trust and act as a confidant; and his inspirational drive and guidance, which embolden youth to succeed in new and frightening environments – from college, to jobs, and foster home transitions.

“Second chances are part of learning and growing for all of us. That’s why we believe in second chances for our children, families, and even our staff. We believe in their ability to rise above difficult circumstances and past mistakes to achieve their full potential. Sometimes, we are giving children their first chances. When Raul was young, he was denied even the most basic opportunities to be healthy and successful. Like many of the young people we serve, once he was given a chance, he blossomed,” said Elizabeth McCarthy, CEO of Sheltering Arms.

While guiding youth to their first triumphant achievements, Raul was celebrating his own transformed life. He has surrounded himself with a loving wife and son, in whom he has discovered a family he never knew as a child. He named his son Chance, with a nod toward hope for the future, a future in which his son will know love and stability unlike

anything Raul experienced growing up. He crossed the stage to accept his Bachelor’s diploma amid cheers from his wife, siblings, and from Sheltering Arms’ Executive Director. It was the first time anyone had been there to celebrate his accomplishments. Now Raul is there for teens in foster care at Sheltering Arms.

“When I first started here, I worked in the Juvenile Justice program and then in the crisis unit with youth who had been exposed to severe trauma like me. These kids realize when somebody else has been through something too. It’s how they talk, how they walk, how they can maneuver in a room. I had kids who would only speak to me because they knew how strongly I would advocate for them.”

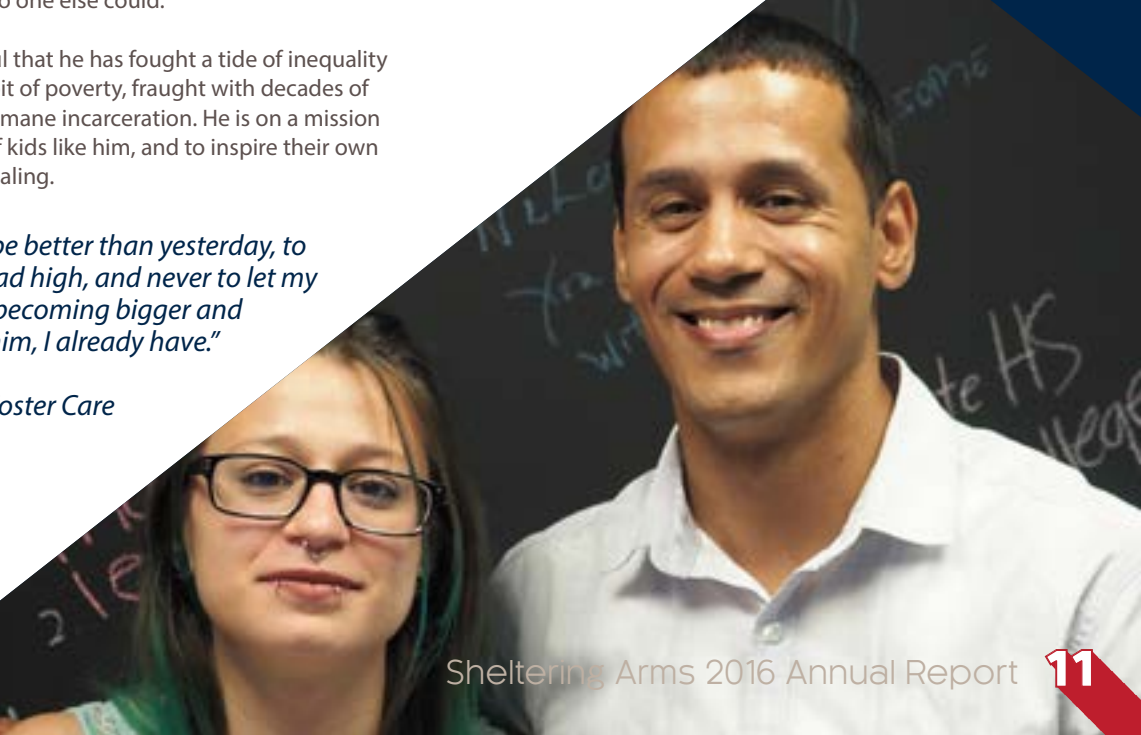
“Whenever I needed a helping hand, he was always there. He will stop doing anything to help or give advice,” says Emily\*, a youth in Foster Care at Sheltering Arms. “When I had a serious altercation that could have and sent me off track, he helped me understand why I felt how I did. He could put my feelings into words and he understood exactly where I was coming from when I felt that no one else could.”

It’s not enough for Raul that he has fought a tide of inequality and climbed out of a pit of poverty, fraught with decades of severe abuse and inhumane incarceration. He is on a mission to protect hundreds of kids like him, and to inspire their own difficult journeys to healing.

*“He inspires me to be better than yesterday, to always keep my head high, and never to let my past stop me from becoming bigger and better. Because of him, I already have.”*

*-Emily, Youth in Foster Care*

\*This story is told as Raul remembers it, based on his recollections of events.



# Juvenile Justice

“Like most teenagers, the idea of sitting down alone in a room with an adult talking about your problems is foreign and threatening, but once you engage them in a more relatable way, the kids open up about the past abuse or trauma they have suffered. We offer a range of creative arts media – music, dance, art, drama - as ways to address the past and the positive potential in each youth. It allows them to actually feel and recognize the ways their body responded to painful past events, and allows them to work with the feelings rather than be ruled by them. The positive experiences of Creative Arts Therapy don't wipe away the trauma, but I like to think of them as seeds that might grow, if not now, then later in life. The human mind provides memories that will come to us when we feel defeated, hopeless, and like we can't do anything right. For our youth, the memories of the time when they did manage to master an instrument, communicate their experiences in song lyrics, find the courage to perform, and thrive on the applause from their audience, those memories can sustain them when they most need it. There's an awful lot working against the kids, but I firmly believe that, down the road, these seeds will take root and blossom.”

– John Shaw, Ph.D., Director of Residential Mental Health Services, Juvenile Justice Program

**99%**

of youth made measurable academic improvement in our residential juvenile justice program for girls, such as advancing grades, passing the regents and making honor role.

**66%**

of youth in Juvenile Justice programs participated in Creative Arts Therapy.

**75%**

of youth graduated from our juvenile probation mentoring program with enrollment in school, vocational training, or jobs.

Portraits of staff have been generously contributed by Kelly Campbell as part of her “Unsung & Untold” portrait project honoring heroes in human services. Follow our #EverydayHeroes hashtag on social media for more portraits.

# Foster Care & Family Preservation

“Today, mental health is one of the major reasons our children are coming into foster care. The crack epidemic left generations of families to struggle with mental illness. In the years since crack was introduced, we've seen more instances of schizophrenia and more bipolar cases, kids who were born with mental health issues. It created new imperatives for better mental health services in foster care - the need to support children from the very beginning, to get them evaluated, to treat those complex diagnoses. It's why, as a social worker, you have to be a problem-solver and think outside the box. The steps we take can make a family's entire life.”

The best part of my job is either completing an adoption or reunifying a family, and knowing that we've made the right decision to help keep that family whole. Many biological parents really love their children and were just put in a bad situation. I love when we can work very hard to strengthen a biological parent to the level, physically and mentally, where they can care of their child again. If we're not able to reunify, I love to see when we have good foster parents who go above and beyond the call of duty to give that child all of their love.”

– Ilene Colbert-Smith, Assistant Director, Foster Care program

**75%**

of eligible youth secured jobs or vocational training, compared with 45% nationwide.

**100%**

of families in the Family Treatment & Rehabilitation program stayed together and avoided foster care placement. 92% of cases were closed because families met their goals.

**#1**

The Sheltering Arms Family Connections program, a family preservation initiative, was ranked first out of 31 programs across the city by independent evaluators.

# Early Childhood Education & Afterschool

"The kids we serve are living well below the poverty line. The vast majority of their parents are immigrants. These are the most terrifying and stressful times for our families because of the attacks on immigrants. Many are afraid to leave the house to go to work or pick up food, so the children don't eat or get clean diapers except when they are with us. We see our families experiencing deep depression. Some of them are able to share their fears; others are withdrawn. That's why we provide services for the whole family here. Not only are we supporting young children with a foundational education, we provide free childcare, food, clothing, diapers, parent workshops, and even mental health services for parents and children. We also provide classes and resources for parents who are unable to read and write, or who are learning English, so they can advocate for their kids with us. We are determined to make a difference!"

— Keisha Kennedy, Teacher, Early Childhood Education Program

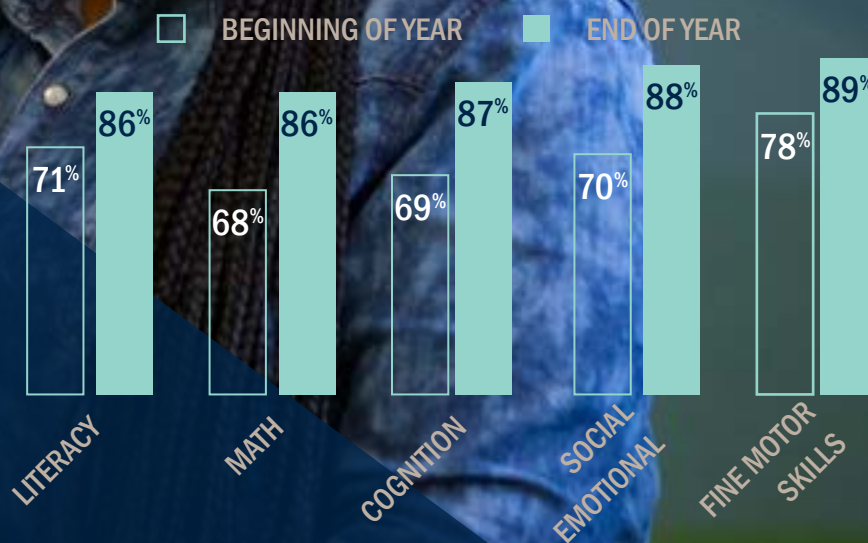
**100%**

of eligible 5th and 8th graders in our Afterschool program graduated on time.

**125**

dads enrolled in our Fatherhood Initiative for parents of children enrolled in our Pre-K centers.

## CHILDREN MEETING OR EXCEEDING DEVELOPMENTAL EXPECTATIONS



# Cure Violence

"As a violence interrupter, I'm trained to detect, mediate, and interrupt conflict for individuals at high risk of violence. Then, through constant work and communication, I attempt to help those same individuals change themselves, as well as the norms in our community that lead to violence.

I've done time in prison myself, but I decided to be part of the solution, as opposed to being part of the problem. I figured out that the way to do that was to change the way I think. A person's actions are only a manifestation of their thoughts.

You know what created the change in me? Mental exhaustion. I was tired. I had been in prison too many times for too long. I finally woke up. Each individual in that life reaches the point of being tired at different times in their lives, where they just want to live a regular life. With support from programs like this, it is possible to get a GED, get a job, and live a different kind of life. I try to paint that picture for all the youth that I come in contact with. I use myself as an example, and hopefully, my story will help them make better decisions. Now that I'm home, I give my 'new self' to the community. I want to try and prevent the things that I once partook in when I was younger. I care about the youth and I want them to do the right thing, to follow the right path, so I'm trying to lead by example."

— Keith Davis, Violence Interrupter, Rock Safe Streets program

**90%**

reduction in shootings in our service area since our 2015 program launch.

**466**

Our Violence Interruption Street Team mediated 466 potential conflicts with individuals at risk of violence.

**1,500**

Youth pledged themselves to non-violence in our service area.



# Mental Health

"I went into the profession of social work because I have a history of trauma myself. One of my goals is to provide a voice for children who don't have one. Since I've been in their shoes, I have an idea of what they're experiencing, what they're feeling. Through the years, I have observed that social problems are intergenerational. When I work with victims or perpetrators of domestic violence and hear their stories, I find that they are just doing what they were exposed to when they were young. That's why early intervention and detection is so important. If only I could go back in time.

The best part of my job is that every mommy and child leaves my session holding hands, happy. Every success, every child who gets a good report card, every parent who reaches out to me and tells me I have made a difference in their child's life, is a reminder that people do change and is a reason for hope."

– Joanna Barberi-Rosario, Child & Parent Psychotherapist, "Seen & Heard" Early Intervention Program



**94%**

of parents in the Seen & Heard mental health program lowered parental stress, a risk factor for abuse, over the course of services.

**98%**

of clients in Seen & Heard reduced their top three risk factors for abuse.

**193**

of our educators were trained by our mental health team to improve mental wellness for students and their families. That's 222% above our goal for training experts in year one of the city's Connections to Care mental health initiative.

# Health Services

"One of the most important jobs for a pediatrician is being an advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves. Children in foster care and in the juvenile justice system are an inherently vulnerable population. Sheltering Arms gives us an opportunity to provide general pediatric care in a very comprehensive, patient-first way. You get to know the families personally, and get to work with the whole team here. It's a multidisciplinary approach with the social workers, the therapists, caseworkers and both the biological and foster families working together to support the health of the child.

The pace of medicine is getting faster and faster. In a hospital or private practice setting, you have less time with families, and less one-on-one time with patients. The priority here is taking care of the kids, speaking up for them, and following up, because who's doing it otherwise?"

– Dr. Becky Kirkham, Pediatrician, Sheltering Arms Health Clinic



**98%**

of children served by our health clinic received on-time wellness exams & immunizations.

**97%**

of HIV positive youth residing at our Safe Home attended all of their medical appointments.

**99%**

of children in our Prenatal/Maternal Health Program are developing on target.

# Developmental Disabilities Services

"I support the developmentally disabled adults at our home in Harlem. We have a lot to learn from them. We sometimes think we are normal and the developmentally disabled are different, but I think they are the ones who are normal. They don't carry the burden of stereotypes about others. They aren't hardened by society. They don't judge you. They don't care what clothes you have on or what your background is. They'll always welcome you, laughing, when you come home. That's what I explain when people ask why I choose to work with adults who have Autism and Down's Syndrome. Coming here is an escape for me.

When I bring them into the community to help them build their skills and independence, people may not understand them or may be nervous around them. When I would take our individuals to the barber to get their hair cut, barbers would turn us away and say they didn't have any more openings for the day, or close early. So I got my barber's training and license and now I cut the guys' hair. It allows them the dignity they deserve."

– Derrick Floyd, Direct Service Professional, Developmental Disabilities Services Program



**62** **100%** **93%**

adults live independently in one of our community homes, free from isolated, institutional facilities.

of disabled adults received specialized opportunities for skill development.

of families with relatives in the program said they would recommend us to other families.

# Not all Heroes Wear Capes – Volunteers Take Action

"I am inspired to give back when I open my eyes to the out-sized and lasting impact a seemingly small gift can have on a life. Whether it is providing necessities like diapers, consistent meals, or a safe and colorful place to play; or imbuing a 10-year-old child from the Bronx with dreams for the future after a trip to midtown Manhattan for the first time in his life – added up, over time, these small doses of kindness can permanently change a person's direction in life. The mission of Sheltering Arms is a noble one, as it works to educate and elevate. Hearing and seeing the life-changing impact of Sheltering Arms' programs on successful participants is one of the most inspiring things I have ever witnessed. The role I play is small, but each year I am inspired to try to do more."

– Jackie Hamilton, Senior Managing Director at Macquarie Group, Veteran Volunteer and Donor



**1000+** **2,000**

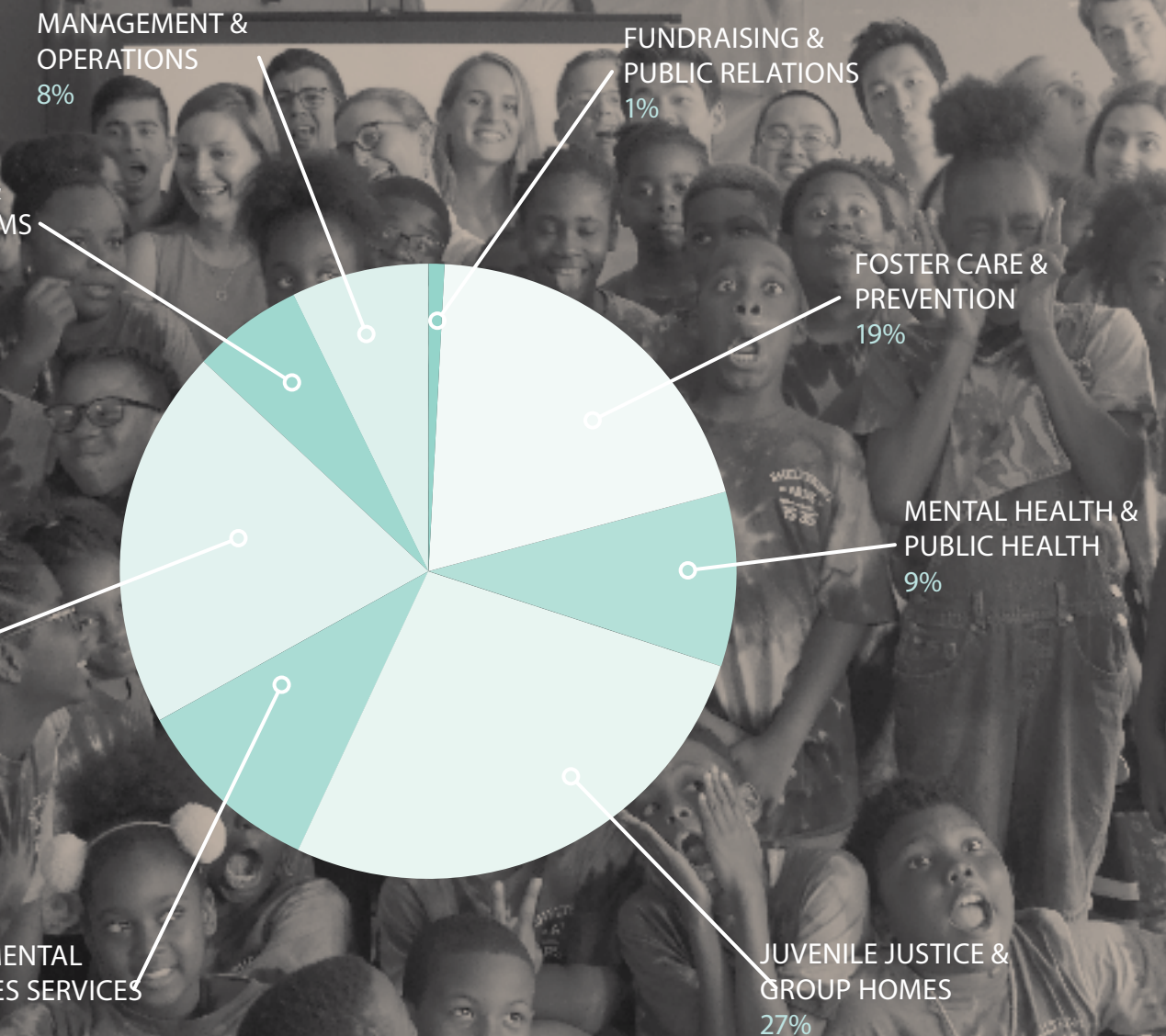
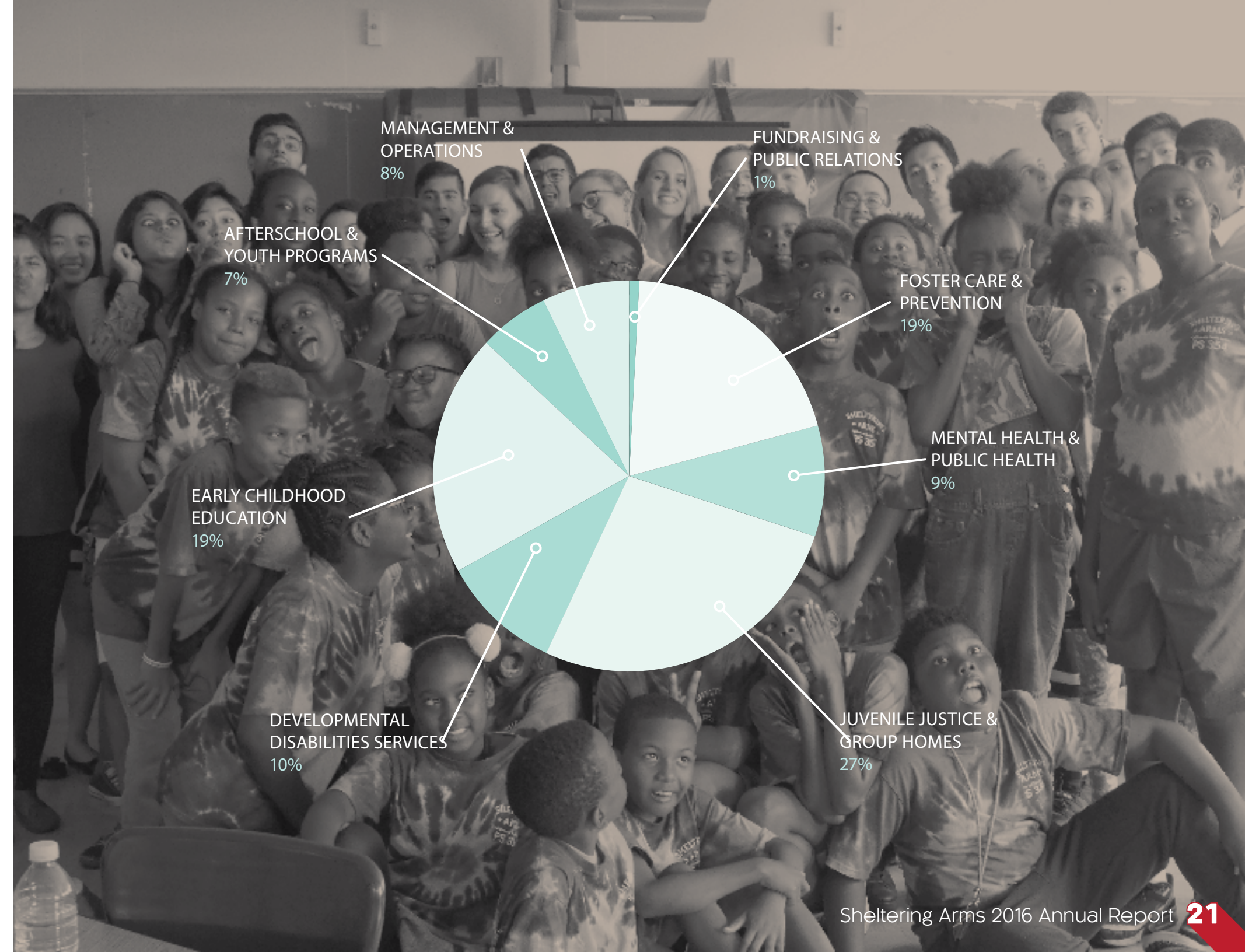
volunteers supported our children and families this year.

children received mentorship support from corporate volunteers.

# 2015-2016 STATEMENT

## OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITY

	JUNE 30, 2016	JUNE 30, 2015
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Grants, Contributions & Special Events	2,529,580	2,002,732
Parent Fees (Child Care)	1,862,216	1,426,519
Government Grants, Contracts & Support	63,697,081	59,781,890
Medicaid & Health Related Income	12,352,344	11,994,755
Other Revenue	880,070	601,287
Investment Return Used for Operations	349,044	585,993
<b>TOTAL REVENUE &amp; SUPPORT</b>	<b>81,670,335</b>	<b>76,393,176</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>PROGRAM EXPENSES</b>		
Foster Care & Prevention	15,317,204	15,076,353
Mental Health & Public Health	7,020,647	6,795,042
Juvenile Justice & Group Homes	21,919,577	20,302,033
Developmental Disabilities Services	7,690,986	7,849,953
Early Childhood Education	15,200,080	15,280,543
Afterschool & Youth Programs	5,802,141	4,843,951
Other Programs	0	8,432
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES</b>	<b>72,950,635</b>	<b>70,156,307</b>
<b>SUPPORT SERVICES EXPENSES</b>		
Management & General	6,256,740	5,543,142
Fundraising & Public Relations	664,516	739,012
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT SERVICES</b>	<b>6,924,256</b>	<b>6,282,154</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>79,874,891</b>	<b>76,438,461</b>
<b>RESULTS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>1,795,444</b>	<b>-45,285</b>
<b>TOTAL RESULTS</b>	<b>1,795,444</b>	<b>-45,285</b>



# DONORS

## 50,000 & Higher

Child Welfare Fund  
The Clark Foundation  
The Estate of Donald E. Whelan  
The Hearst Foundation, Inc.  
The Joan Ganz Cooney & Holly Peterson Fund  
MAC AIDS Fund  
Macquarie Group  
Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City  
Virginia Miller McCarthy  
The Pinkerton Foundation  
Robin Hood Foundation  
Save the Children  
Stavros Niarchos Foundation  
Tiger Foundation  
van Ameringen Foundation, Inc.

## \$10,000 to \$49,999

Anonymous  
BNY Mellon  
Gail Coleman & Saul Kupferberg  
Carl & Caroline Contiguglia  
Frances L. & Edwin L. Cummings Memorial Fund  
Julie & Robert Daum  
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Robert Dinerstein  
George and Tonya Evans  
James & Elizabeth Pickman Foundation  
KPMG LLP  
Kenneth & Susan Kramer  
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The Kupferberg Foundation

Matthijssen Business Systems  
Midnight Mission Fund in The New York Community Trust  
Morgan Stanley & Morgan Stanley Foundation  
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Elizabeth Munson & Robert L. Von Stade  
New Place Foundation  
The New Yankee Stadium Community Benefits Fund  
PwC LLP  
Ryan Schulke & Sandy Inn-Schulke  
Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP  
Deborah Snyder & James Platt  
Sullivan & Cromwell LLP  
Jennifer & Peter Wallace  
Carl & Susan Webster

## \$5,000 - \$9,999

The Blackstone Charitable Foundation  
Dechert LLP  
Deloitte Services LP  
Donnelley Financial Solutions  
Dorfman Abrams Music, LLC  
Dun & Bradstreet, Inc.  
Edward S. Moore Family Foundation  
Thomas Flakstad  
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Silverpeak Real Estate Partners  
J. Fredrick Stillman III & Debra Stillman  
The Holborn Foundation  
Scott & Samantha Zinober

## \$2,500 to \$4,999

James Amor  
BenefitMall  
Boies Schiller & Flexner LLP  
David Broderick  
Zachary W. Carter  
DAR 525 Inc.  
DLA Piper LLP  
Facility Concession Services Inc.  
Daniel Gutzmore  
Keith Hernandez  
Richard & Sharon Jones  
Matt Lancaster  
Leland Trust for Charitable Purposes  
Max and Selma Kupferberg Family Foundation  
Glenn Mincey  
Alton Rogers, Jr.  
John & Heather Sargent  
Matthew & Priyanka Schneider  
Alfred Stillman  
H. Craig & Lora Beth Treiber  
WellCare  
Scott Wilson  
Greg & Jan Winchester

## \$1,000 to \$2,500

The 1906 Project  
John T. Andrews  
Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Andrew Au  
Bayside Refrigeration Inc.  
Benefitplan Manager Corp.  
George D. Benjamin  
Anita Borawska  
A R Brooks FBO ASPCA ETAL  
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Driscoll Foods  
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Dominic Freud  
Eshai Gorshein  
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Greg Grogan  
Jacquelyn Hamilton & Mark Dingle

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