

# 2021 Impact Report



# Letter from the CEO

Dear CRT Mission Partners,

It is our great pleasure to share our 2021 impact on the children and families we serve through your dedicated support. Because of you, despite the challenges of the pandemic, CRT continued to offer the same high-quality services to hundreds of children and their families primarily from Chicago’s historically underserved communities of color.

CRT witnessed the COVID-19 crisis exacerbate the trauma-related mental health issues among the clients served by CRT that were already at high risk due to poverty, community violence exposure, criminal justice involvement, substance abuse, and other trauma in their communities. The impact of the pandemic on children’s mental health is being recognized as an urgent public health issue in our country. Increased substance abuse, increased physical aggression, lack of socialization, and skipped developmental steps have resulted in the need for more mental health services for youth.

Prior to the Covid-19 crisis the communities served by CRT had a scarcity of mental health services, but the pandemic created more need for services while also increasing barriers to access. CRT’s community partners experienced instability and requested more services from CRT, including support for staff to manage their own stress and increased workloads.

CRT’s greatest success in 2021 was that we continued to serve every client and even increase services. The pivot to teletherapy continues to reduce barriers to access, even as in-person services have opened up. We supported our community partners, not only by continuing to see clients, but also by filling case management gaps and supporting the mental health needs of agency staff. We expanded our work with fathers by beginning a collaboration with the Evanston Vet Center, offering dyadic therapy and Systematic Training for Effective Parenting groups.

CRT continues to see a greater need for mental health services. Our waitlists are longer, and the requests for services have increased, especially from schools who need behavioral and mental health support for both students and staff. It’s the consistent support for our mission partners that allows us to continue to serve clients as well as to plan for growth in services to meet these new challenges. As we reflect on 2021, we are deeply grateful to all of those whose commitment has allowed us to stand by children and families.

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Sincerely,  
  
Linda Schwartz, PhD, CEO

# Impact by the numbers

**774** children served

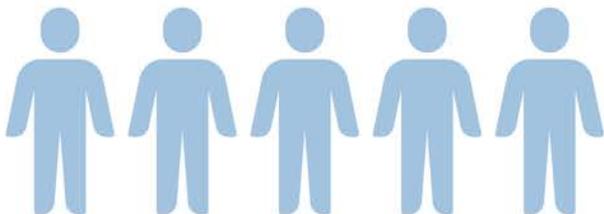
**554** children received mental health therapy

**7,249** therapy hours provided to children and families

**1,558** individuals received mental health training

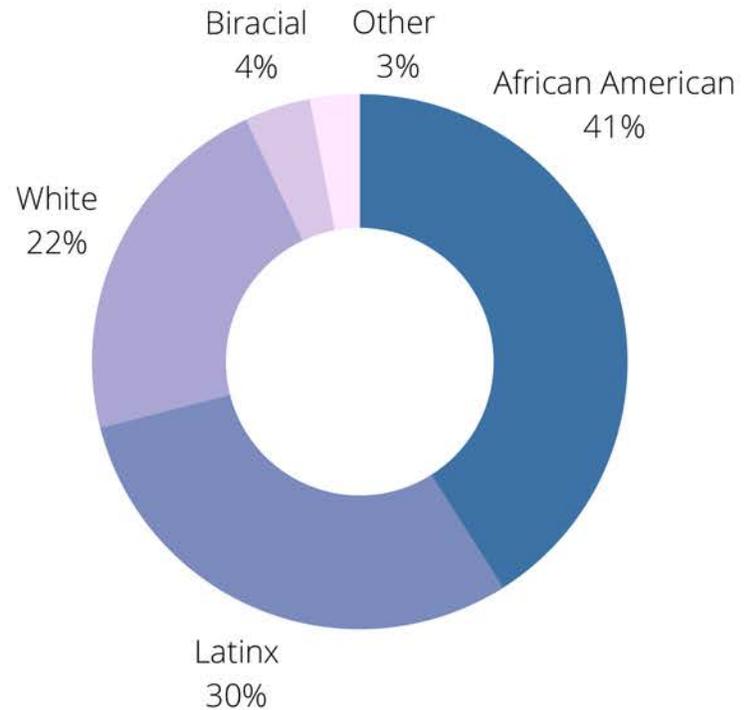
**91%** of children served from low income families

**95%** of clinical services provided at no cost

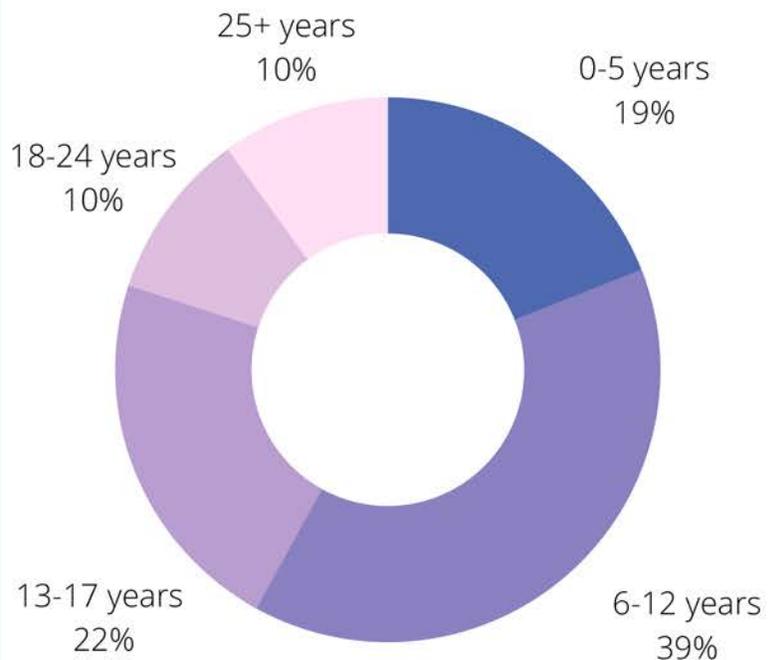


## Children served

### By Race/Ethnicity



### By Age



# Clinical Services

CRT provides mental health services to at-risk youth and their families facing specialized issues including child abuse and neglect, prenatal substance exposure, domestic and community violence, foster care and military deployment, often in combination. CRT continues to reduce barriers to accessing mental health services by using a community partner service delivery model. By co-locating services at community-based organizations and schools in neighborhoods with high unmet mental health needs, CRT is able to reach children and families with the greatest need for these services. Thank you to our amazing community partners who make this work possible!

CRT provides group therapy for youth and caregivers including **Circle of Security Parenting (COSP)**, an innovative attachment-based intervention program designed to improve the developmental pathway of young children and their parents. The evidence-based model uses discussion and videos to increase caregivers' understanding of attachment, ability to see behaviors as communication of a need, and explores ways to respond sensitively to children's emotional cues. By reflecting on their own experience of being parented, it offers a unique roadmap to understand patterns of attachment and communication, as well as how to manage their own struggles within the parent-child relationship.

“  
Circle of Security  
changed the way  
I approach  
parenting.  
-CRT client  
”

One recent CRT participant realized that she was never allowed to express anger when she was growing up, and now becomes overwhelmed when her children express feelings of anger. She stated that learning the COSP model changed the way she approaches parenting. Another parent came to realize that her child's behavior of being clingy and interrupting her during work was really a bid for connection and to show off new projects he was doing in school. By seeing his behavior in a different way, she was able to decrease her own frustration to change the way she responded to him. She was able to set up boundaries around interruptions while attending to his need for connection by setting aside time to go over his day together. This allowed him to feel delighted in and proud of, rather than rejected or ignored.



# CRT Partners with

# 18

community-based organizations and schools in underserved communities



## Chicago West Side

- A House In Austin (Austin)
- DRW College Prep (North Lawndale)
- Manley Career Academy (North Lawndale)
- Noble Street College Prep High School (Pulaski Park)
- New Moms (Austin)
- Al Raby High Schools (East Garfield Park)
- VOCEL (West Loop)

## Chicago South Side

- Edgar Allan Poe Classical School (Pullman)
- Wendell Smith Elementary School (Roseland-Pullman)
- Family Focus Englewood (Englewood)
- The Montessori School of Englewood (Englewood)
- Johnson College Prep High School (Englewood)

## West Suburbs

- Forest Park Vet Center (Forest Park)
- Oak Park Infant Welfare Society (Oak Park)

## South Suburbs

- Heights School District 170 (Chicago Heights)
- Pillars Community Health (Southwest suburbs)
- Ridgeland School District 122 (Chicago Ridge/Lawn area)

## North Suburbs

- Evanston Vet Center (Evanston)

One of the hallmarks of CRT therapists is that they are highly trained in evidence-based practices to provide intensive, trauma-informed therapy to at-risk populations. In 2021, 7 therapists were trained in Child-Parent Psychotherapy, 7 therapists were trained in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and 3 therapists were trained in Parent Child Interaction Therapy.



## Clinical Staff Feature

### Venezah St. Louis, LCSW

The training I've received at CRT has been extremely beneficial to both my personal skill set as a therapist and my evolving practice with my current clients. I have learned new ways to gently but intentionally address trauma with my clients, even as young as 3 and 4 years old. I know how to support a client through identifying their emotions and experiences through verbal processing, but also through play and art-based activities. I also have an increased understanding of how to welcome parents into the therapy space and support them in their desire to have a more emotionally attuned and responsive relationship with their child. The wonderful thing about being a part of learning collaboratives is that the skills that you learn don't just stop once you finish the collaborative. Those skills are now a part of the way that I practice therapy, in general. Whether I am explicitly doing the model with a client or not, I am still open to using skills that I learned from the models, if it is beneficial to my client in the moment.

# Training

Training is a core component of CRT, providing educational training on the impact of trauma on youth for community professionals and stakeholders, increasing awareness regarding treatment options for traumatized youth, and promoting a trauma-informed lens to external stakeholders. Based on more than 16 years of partnering with schools and social service agencies, CRT's work with personnel within child-serving systems serves to change the approach, attitudes, and awareness of individuals interacting with youth daily. We work to build more trauma-informed systems that prioritize mental health treatment to prevent and intervene with mental health issues.

# Research

Research is CRT's middle name, and its one of the things that sets CRT apart from other organizations. Working with CRT's clinical teams, the Research team captures data and client feedback to measure outcomes and fine-tune programs, thereby sustaining a high level of effective research-driven clinical interventions. CRT has been collecting program evaluation data since 1998 and has consistently demonstrated successful outcomes for our clients and partner site staff. The Research Team is comprised of a full time doctoral-level director, four full-time research associates, and 9 research interns annually.

## Youth Mental Health First Aid

In 2021, CRT helped to increase mental health service capacity by providing Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training to 591 non-mental health professionals who interact with youth. The training equips participants to recognize the symptoms of common mental illnesses and substance use disorders; strategies to deescalate crisis situations safely; and how to initiate timely referrals to mental health and substance abuse resources available in the community.

“ This course has provided detailed information I need for ongoing relationships I maintain with several adolescents with mental health concerns. It gives me a direction as to how to address, converse, and cope with the problems they face daily. - YMHFA Participant ”

## Trauma Treatment Youth Outcomes

94% Decreased Trauma Symptoms

91% Improved Emotional Functioning



# Camp SOAR

Camp SOAR has been providing a unique overnight camping experience for children and youth with disabilities since 1999. After a year of virtual camp during the pandemic, Camp SOAR was able to welcome back campers and counselors at reduced numbers to allow for more social distancing. Seventy-six in-person campers, 10 virtual campers, and 96 counselors had a blast playing, swimming, singing, laughing, and creating priceless camp memories. Camp SOAR impacts not only the campers, but also provides invaluable support and respite for parents and a life-changing experience for the volunteer counselors. Thank you to our Camp SOAR funders and donors who helped us raise the difference between the \$475 camp tuition and the actual cost of \$1,300 per camper. Camp costs are also kept low by volunteer counselors who provide one-to-one support for campers. Thank you to our 2021 Camp SOAR counselors who made this opportunity possible for children with disabilities and their families!



- |                    |                  |                     |                     |
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# Donors

Thank you to CRT's generous donors, without whom we would not be able to serve children at risk for developmental, behavioral, psychological, or educational challenges. We are grateful for donations of any amount; here we list those donors of \$100 or more in 2021.

## **\$50,000 and above**

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Crown Family Philanthropies  
Michael Reese Health Trust  
Smith Barney Charitable Trust

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## **\$15,000-\$24,999**

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## **\$10,000-\$14,999**

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Marilyn & Max Zollner

**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

CRT gratefully acknowledges the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for significant support for our programs, including Project LAUNCH, Early Childhood Mental Health, Training, and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.

## Revenue: Funding Sources

CRT strives to maintain a balanced budget, frugal financial practices, and diverse funding streams so that funding is used primarily for the children and families we serve.

Federal Funding Sources \$1,791,899 (60%)

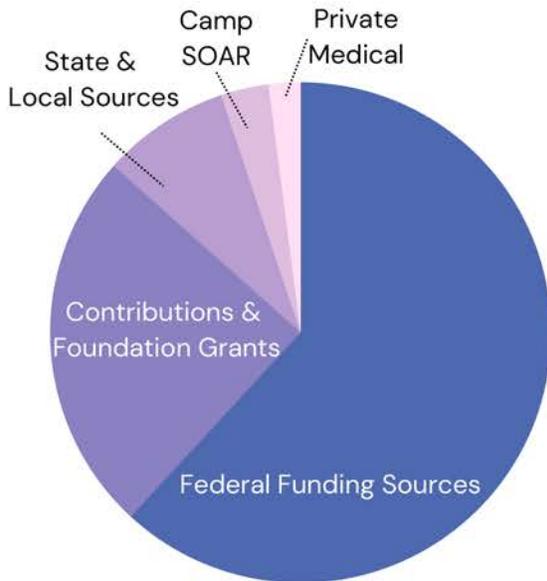
Contributions & Foundation Grants \$697,750 (24%)

State & Local Sources \$234,821 (8%)

Camp SOAR \$96,525 (3%)

Private Medical \$89,474 (3%)

Other \$59,646 (2%)

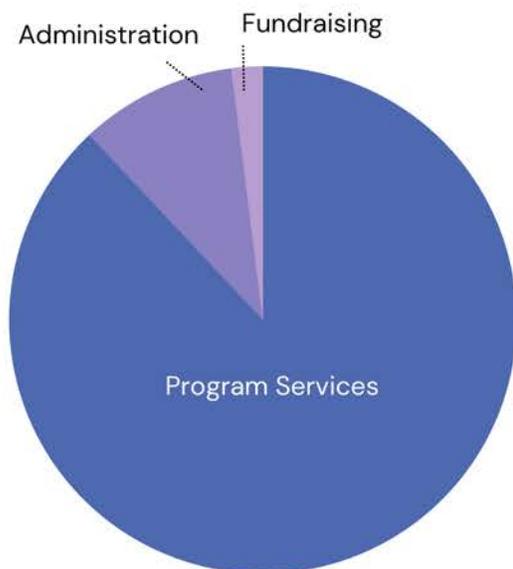


## Expenses: Funding Uses

Program Services \$2,598,979 (88%)

Administration \$307,150 (10%)

Fundraising \$52,116 (2%)



# Children's Research Triangle Board & Staff

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