

# CRT

CHILDREN'S RESEARCH TRIANGLE



## Annual Report 2015

# CRT Highlights of 2015 ~



- In 2015, Children's Research Triangle's (CRT) Trauma Treatment Program continued to expand service capacity and provided trauma-informed therapy services to 456 youth, an 11% increase from 2014.
- The Cook County Justice Advisory Council awarded CRT a Violence Prevention Grant to initiate a new school-based program that addresses the staggering problem of youth violence in Chicago.
- CRT staff conducted 40 community trainings for 763 individuals, including teachers, principals, attorneys, legal advocates, domestic violence shelter staff and child care professionals.
- Tiffany Conroy, CRT staff therapist and community trainer, was awarded a *Community Spirit Award* from Chicago Safe Start, a Chicago Department of Public Health program, in recognition of her leadership role in addressing childhood exposure to violence.
- 136 enthusiastic teen and young adult volunteers joined 106 campers with special needs during the summer of 2015 to create lasting memories of Camp SOAR at Wesley Woods in Williams Bay, WI.



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# Clinical Work ~

## *A family's experience—*

Our adoption journey started many years ago and finalized in 2014. We were able to adopt biological sisters, Abigail, 6, and Ella, 5. They were super sweet and ready to enter a new life. We were educated by adoption seminars, countless books and other adoptive families. Reading adoption blogs became my hidden hobby and had stolen many hours of my night time. As a mom I felt I was ready. Our 9 year old biological son was super excited about new sisters.

Although it is common for children in Polish orphanages to have had biological parents who abused alcohol, we felt good about seeking Polish adoptions. My husband and I were born in Poland, and we knew the culture and the language. Both of our daughters were diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). That was scary. Everything I have learned about FASD was dreadful and I had two children whose development and behavior have been affected by parental alcohol abuse, and who experienced trauma and neglect. It was overwhelming.

We are so thankful Children's Research Triangle was able to provide a grant for us. In June 2015 our older daughter, Abigail, started therapy with Ms. Joyce Chestek; it was a breaking moment for us. Among many things, she was diagnosed with PTSD which was very hard for us to accept, but the past was still present in her behavior. The warm welcome she received from Ms. Joyce helped her to break her fear and after few sessions she was able to stay at therapy by herself. Therapy made a huge difference in her life. It provided a format for Abigail to tell us about her previous experience and give her emotions a voice. It is amazing to see the difference. Ms. Joyce advocated for Abigail at school and was always available to talk and to translate Abigail's behavior into new perspective. We are very thankful for all of the hard work of Ms. Joyce and the personnel of CRT.



Our younger daughter, Ella, started weekly therapy with Ms. Julianna Wesolowski in a parent – child session, where Ms. Julianna showed me how to work more intensively to nurture Ella and meet her emotional needs. I have learned that a preventive, integrated system of care can help at every age. After a few sessions I could see a big difference in Ella's behavior, she became more attached to me and she experienced more love and was able to give more love.



I feel CRT impacted my family in many ways. We have started a new chapter and we were given tools to deal with all the challenges FASD has brought into our family life. Also, the parent support group was instrumental to me; I met mothers like me who were ahead of me in this journey. I can learn from them and get the support I needed. I can now encourage my friends who are adopting that there is hope. This is what CRT is doing.

*Thank you.*

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# Research ~

## **MAINTAINING MOMENTUM**

The Research Team of Children's Research Triangle continues to focus on providing program evaluation for all clinical services offered by CRT, including 16 state, local and federal grants. CRT was selected by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network to participate in the Clinical Improvement through Measurement Initiative,



a pilot project focused on collecting data from multiple sites nationwide. Shared data allows experts throughout the country to analyze outcomes and gain greater understanding of intervention methods with youth experiencing trauma.

## **DISSEMINATING FINDINGS**

CRT's Research Team was pleased to present our findings at a Chicago Public School Research Briefing Brown Bag, a CPS initiative designed to help CPS staff members learn more about outside researchers who are doing studies within the schools. Since CRT has been doing program evaluation on our Trauma Treatment Program since 2010, CPS was eager to learn about the impact this program was having on their students.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Children's Research Triangle was pleased to have two papers accepted for publication in scholarly journals: "Mental Health Disorders among Children within Child Welfare who have Prenatal Substance Exposure: Rural vs. Urban Populations," in *Child Welfare*, and "Misdiagnosis and Missed Diagnoses in Foster and Adopted children with Prenatal Alcohol Exposure." in *Pediatrics*.

## **NEW PROJECTS**

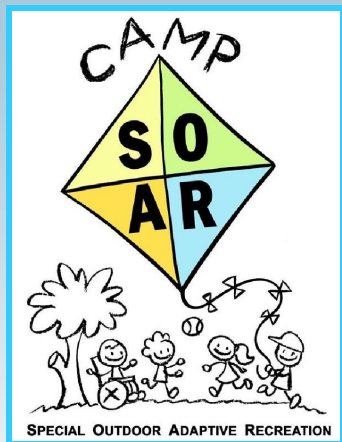
In 2015 CRT was awarded three new grants: The Cook County Justice Advisory Council, the Col. Stanley R. McNeil Foundation and the George M. Eisenberg Foundation. These grants allow us to provide increased clinical services and evaluate outcomes of CRT's interventions with an expanded group of Chicago youth.

## **TRAINING UPDATES**

The CRT research intern program continues to flourish. Twenty-one interns representing nine colleges and universities joined the 2015 program.



# Camp SOAR ~



**Quincy** Bane has been a Camp SOAR camper since 2010 and has even participated in CRT's annual Heroes of Our Hearts gala as a raffle ticket seller.

A young girl with Down Syndrome, her family heard about camp through friends and the stories of planned activities and fun as well as the counselors and medical staff made them want to give it a try. Quincy is now a seasoned SOAR-ER who talks about camp all year long and can't wait to start packing every year.



Her camp friends are a happy group of children Quincy has known since infancy, along with those she has met at SOAR and looks forward to seeing every summer. One of Quincy's favorite parts of Camp SOAR is the yearly memory book she makes at camp. Whenever she and her fellow camper, Colleen, have a sleepover they go through the books from each and every year. No Quincy/Colleen sleepover is complete without the Camp SOAR memory book review.

While it is not unusual for a camper to become more independent after being at camp, it's something which always surprises parents. For Quincy's parents, Cheryl and Brad, it was the fact their normally extremely picky eater daughter (who does not like bread, dairy, sweets or spicy food), developed a taste for pepperoni pizza at SOAR!



Quincy's story is similar to many Camp SOAR campers. They have found a place to have fun and grow at their own pace, without judgement. And their families have found a place where their child is encouraged to make friends and enjoy a typical summer camp experience in a safe and nurturing environment.

*Camp SOAR—Home of Forever Friends*



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## 2015 Children's Holiday Party



*Over the river and through the woods  
To the Hyatt Hotel we go  
Our folks know the way to drive our 'sleigh'  
Through the white and drifted snow.*



*Over the river and through the woods,  
Oh love the day we do  
The games are fun, Santa is jolly  
And everyone dances too*



*Over the river and through the woods  
Oh thank you WH Trading  
For treating us so great  
You are the best, above the rest  
As over the river we go*



---

## 2015 Heroes of Our Hearts Gala



*The 2015 event honored Jeannine Cleary and Frank tenBrink for their support throughout the years of CRT and Camp SOAR. Over 350 guests enjoyed live and silent auctions, jazz music and fine dining.*



*Save the Date ~  
October 29, 2016  
Heroes of Our Hearts Gala  
Loews Chicago Hotel, O'Hare*



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*We gratefully acknowledge the generous gifts of the following donors who contributed between January 1 and December 31, 2015.*

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*Children's Research Triangle thanks the many volunteers whose thousands of hours of time make our programming possible. They are a vital part of our accomplishments.*

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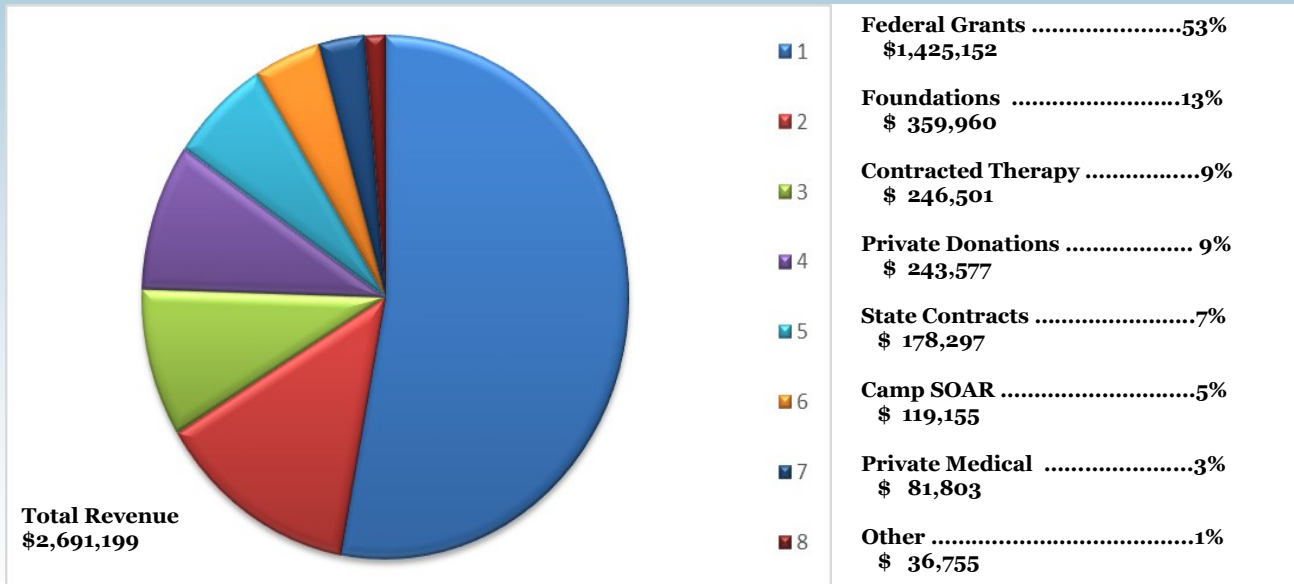
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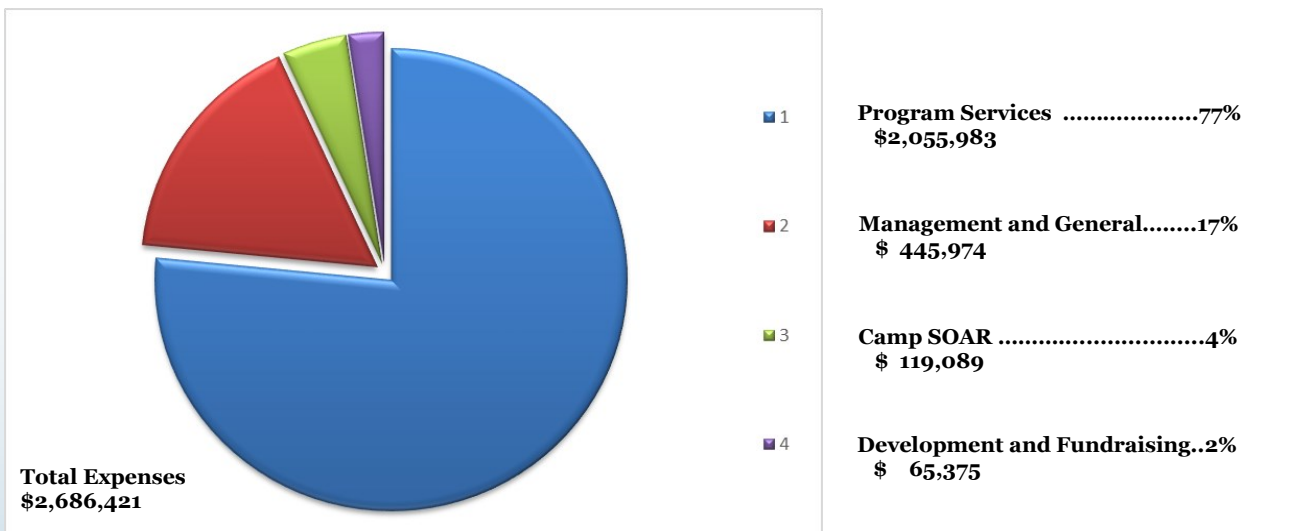
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# Financial Summary ~ FY 2015

## ~ Revenue ~



## ~ Expenses ~



Statement of revenue and expenditures  
FY January 2015—December 2015

This information was compiled from audited financial statements.

A complete copy of our audit is available upon request.

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*Child and Family Therapist  
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## **CRT**

CHILDREN'S RESEARCH TRIANGLE

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