

Directions for Living  
LIFE GETS BETTER HERE.™

# 2024

**ANNUAL**

**REPORT**

JULY 1, 2023 -

JUNE 30, 2024



**TRANSFORMING LIVES, TOGETHER**

## MISSION

## VISION

## VALUES

TOGETHER WE ARE

## RESTORING HOPE

Our mission is to be a welcoming and compassionate provider, advocate, and partner to children, adults, and families in need of integrated healthcare, social support, safety, and hope for the future.

Thriving children.  
Empowered adults.  
Strong families.

Our values are comprised of Five Promises we make to our clients every day:

1. To make you our first priority
2. To listen to your story
3. To protect your privacy
4. To focus on your strengths
5. To restore your hope

Find out more about DFL at  
[www.DirectionsForLiving.org](http://www.DirectionsForLiving.org).



DFL has helped my son and I in various ways, from the Rapid Rehousing program when he was just 2 years old, up through his most recent participation in First Five. I cannot say enough about the incredible work you all do in the community. My son and I are a testament to the success of Directions for Living. As a parent, I can't thank you enough!"

-DFL client

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At the heart of everything we do is a simple truth: we are stronger together.

In fiscal year 2024, we invested in our team members – the compassionate, dedicated individuals who provide some of the toughest, yet most essential services in our community. Their resilience and commitment are the foundation of our work, and because of them, we have been able to serve more people than ever before.

We remain steadfast in our mission to deliver the highest quality trauma-informed care to some of our most vulnerable populations. This year, we have explored new ways to expand our impact, enhance our services, and ensure that no one is left without the care and support they deserve.

None of this would be possible without our incredible Board Members, partners, team members, donors, and supporters. Your belief in our mission fuels our progress and strengthens our ability to make a lasting difference.

As we reflect on this year's accomplishments, we do so with gratitude and determination. The challenges may be great, but together, we are greater. We look forward to continuing this journey with you, working side by side to build a stronger, more compassionate community.

-April Lott  
President & CEO

## THANK YOU TO OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Katrina Griffith  
*Chair*

Jeff Rathmell  
*Vice-Chair*

Christina Dickson  
*Treasurer*

Teresa Conte  
*Secretary*

Princess Jones

Milton Smith

Tony Pacheco





# PROGRAMMATIC PILLARS



## OUTPATIENT SERVICES

We provide therapeutic interventions, support programs, and counseling designed to address mental health disorders, addiction issues, underlying trauma, and other co-occurring disorders, promoting long-term recovery and overall well-being.



## FAMILIES FIRST

Our Wraparound™ services for families use a comprehensive, team-based model that works to address multiple, individualized needs within a family unit, including case management, counseling, skill-building, help with basic needs, and more.



## HOUSING FIRST

DFL offers a range of assistance tailored to the unique needs of children, families, and adults experiencing homelessness in our community, aiming to stabilize their living situations and empower them towards self-sufficiency.



## COMMUNITY EDUCATION

DFL understands that education is paramount in creating awareness, reducing stigma, and fostering understanding around mental health. We are dedicated to leading the conversation by providing important trainings and resources to our community.

TOGETHER WE ARE

REACHING MORE PEOPLE  
THAN EVER BEFORE

**37,174**  
**CLIENTS SERVED**

## CLIENTS SERVED PER PROGRAM

Outpatient Services.....	15,625
Medical Services.....	9,536
Targeted Case Management.....	413
Pinellas County Empowerment Team.....	58
Treatment Works 1.0.....	492
Treatment Works 2.0.....	440
Treatment Works 3.0.....	1,276
Family Works.....	733
Homeless Prevention and Diversion.....	293
SOAR.....	572
Street Outreach.....	5,078
Targeted Prevention.....	222
BabyCAT.....	771
Family Intensive Treatment.....	215
First Five.....	303
Prevention.....	445
Together We Rise.....	406
TRACE.....	27
Community Education.....	269



# **TOGETHER** WE ARE **TEAM DFL**

## **\$4 MILLION INVESTED IN SALARIES**

In fiscal year 2024, DFL increased salaries for most positions in order to attract and retain top talent.

## **19 PAID DAYS OFF**

Directions for Living provided team members with 19 paid holiday and wellness days, promoting rest and self care to support them in maintaining resilience in their work.

## **PRIORITIZED CELEBRATION**

DFL celebrated team members with food, chair massages, and games during Employee Appreciation Day, and with a full day of workshops, giveaways, team-building, and surprises at the annual all-staff celebration event, DU 2024.

## **RENEWED HRSA CERTIFICATION**

Being HRSA-certified for student loan forgiveness allows us to support our team by providing access to valuable federal programs that ease the burden of student debt.



**"I am celebrating 10 years at DFL this year, and am forever grateful for the opportunities I've been given during my time here. The wellness days have been a game changer. I love how DFL is constantly looking for new ways to support our hardworking team."**

**-Brittany, DFL team member**



TOGETHER WE ARE

## ENSURING NO ONE STRUGGLES ALONE

### Treatment Works:

**96.9% of children did not experience a Baker Act while receiving services**

The Treatment Works program provides an intensive Wraparound™ approach to engaging and supporting youth ages 5-18 who are at-risk of harm to themselves or others.

### Mental Health Court:

**88% engagement and diversion rate**

The intent of the program is to reduce the number of persons with mental illness who repeatedly enter the criminal justice system by diverting them to appropriate, effective mental health and supportive services.

#### MENTAL HEALTH COURT IN THE NEWS

Click here to read an article in the Tampa Bay Times spotlighting this innovative program.

“

We've been in therapy for as long as I can remember. It was always a revolving door to Baker Acts. Nobody ever helped us until we met you."

-DFL client



## FROM STRUGGLE TO STRENGTH

### Will's Story

Will's life was filled with instability, moving between Illinois and California due to his parents' divorce. Childhood trauma, including family conflicts and witnessing a fatal accident, led to depression, PTSD, and substance use, sparking a 25-year struggle with addiction, homelessness, and frequent incarcerations.

In 2021, a gunshot wound left him relying on a colostomy bag. Seeking a fresh start, he moved to Florida and entered services with DFL's PCET program. With unwavering determination, he engaged in treatment, attended medical appointments, and successfully had his colostomy bag removed. DFL also helped him secure food stamps, a bus pass, and apply for SSI benefits while assisting him in finding stable housing.

Now, with three years of sobriety and a renewed bond with his mother, Will is preparing for a new chapter. This fall, he has set his sights on college, taking the first step toward a career he always dreamed of. Will is continuing to prove that with resilience and support, a fresh start is always possible.

[Names have been changed for privacy purposes](#)

[Click here to learn more about PCET \(Pinellas County Empowerment Team\)](#)





TOGETHER WE ARE

## KEEPING FAMILIES WHOLE

### **BabyCAT:** Saved the circuit 6 child welfare system \$3,341,390 in out-of-home care costs

DFL's intensive in-home services for families with a child under the age of 5 who are at risk of entering the child welfare system had a 99% success rate in children not entering out-of-home care.

### **FITT:** 16 children reunified

Our Family Intensive Treatment Team (FITT) works to reunify families who have entered the child welfare system due to substance misuse and saved circuit 6 \$1,868,997 in out-of-home care costs.

### **ECC:** 98 parenting classes facilitated

Early Childhood Consultation (ECC) provides a combination of prevention and early intervention services and 93% of parents demonstrated improved family functioning.



### **New program: Together We Rise**

The Together We Rise program provides an intensive Wraparound™ approach to engaging and working with families that have a child deemed safe, but at high or very high risk of future maltreatment. The goal of services is to remove the risk of harm to the child and prevent out-of-home placement through intensive, in-home intervention.

53 families were served and 92% successfully completed the program in its first year.



## New program: First Five

This program provides a research supported approach to engaging and working with identified early learning center teachers in order to create a trauma-informed culture in their classrooms. The First Five team supports teachers of children under 5 years old and their families by providing them with tools that better prepare them to support the complex issues that many of their children are experiencing.

### In its first year:

- 63 families were served
- 53 teachers were served
- 46 parent education groups were held
- 13 Early Learning Centers received training and ongoing coaching



"We have a lot of kids that have experienced trauma, resulting in behavior issues. Over time, I have seen a tremendous amount of positive change within these children and our teachers given the support of the First Five team. Not only have they helped the children and the teachers, they have helped the families above and beyond. They have taken a load off of me as a Director. They have the tools that we do not have, so instead of terminating kids for behavior, we are actually able to keep them and help them be successful. I am very thankful, and if I could keep them forever, I would."

-Learning Center Director



TOGETHER WE ARE

## MAKING SURE KIDS HAVE A SAFE PLACE TO SLEEP

### **Family Works:** **24 families housed**

This program works with children and their families identified by the school system to achieve housing stability.

### **Homeless Diversion & Prevention:** Prevented 52 individuals from eviction

21 households were assisted with past due rent and utilities, keeping them from experiencing a housing crisis.



### **Homeless Outreach Mobile Engagement (HOME):** **770 individuals engaged**

HOME engages with individuals living street homeless in our community, providing food, blankets, hygiene kits, and more when needed.

### **SOAR:** 20 individuals awarded SSI and/or SSDI

This program works to increase access to SSI/SSDI for adults who are experiencing homelessness in our community.

#### FAMILY WORKS IN THE NEWS

Click [here](#) to read more about our Family Works program and the impact that homelessness can have on how students learn and develop, as featured on ABC Action News.



## FROM HOMELESS TO HOPE

### James and Daniel's Story



James and his 13-year-old son, Daniel, faced homelessness after he could no longer stay with his brother. With nowhere to go, they were forced to live in their truck—until Directions for Living's Family Works program stepped in.

The Family Works team quickly secured affordable housing, giving them a stable place to call home. Our partners at the Pineapple Project furnished their apartment, turning an empty space into a warm, welcoming home, while Angels Against Abuse helped provide a Welcome Home Package with essentials like bed sheets and cookware. Directions for Living also helped James restore his food stamp benefits, ensuring he could provide meals for Daniel.

Thanks to Family Works and our partners, James and Daniel have not just a home, but a renewed sense of security and hope for the future.

Names have been changed for privacy purposes



TOGETHER WE ARE

## CHANGING THE CONVERSATION AROUND MENTAL HEALTH

### MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID: 1,180 INDIVIDUALS TRAINED


Including

- 341 First Responders
- 442 Spanish Speakers

Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour course designed to help participants identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness.

### CIT: 174 LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS TRAINED

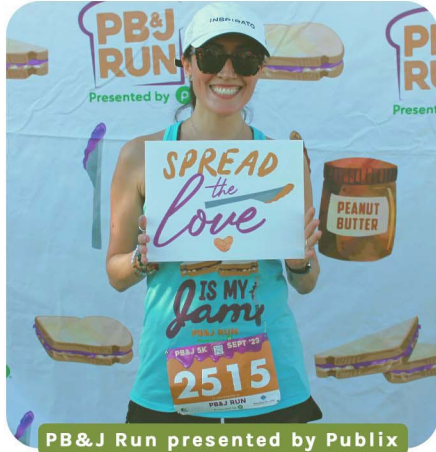
CIT (Crisis Intervention Team) is a week-long training that is designed to improve the way law enforcement responds to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.



"I was holding out on taking this course due to the gross misconceptions. I am glad I took it and have learned a lot of things and ways to deal with difficult situations more appropriately."

-CIT Participant

# IN THE COMMUNITY



PB&J Run presented by Publix



Holiday Adopt-a-Family program



Dr. Sangita Desai (right)

FBHA Medical Professional  
of the Year



Bonnie Morgan (right)

MHFA Coordinator of the Year  
Honorable Mention

## \$55,000 RAISED

Our signature fundraiser, the PB&J Run presented by Publix, brought more than 1,350 runners out to Albert Whitted Park in St. Pete and raised \$55,000 for Directions for Living.

## GIFTS FOR 467 KIDS

We provided 467 kids and about 150 caregivers with holiday gifts, thanks to the generosity of our donors and community partners through our Adopt-a-Family program.

## 3 PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS

DFL Psychiatrist, Dr. Sangita Desai won the FBHA Award of Excellence Medical Professional of the Year, our President & CEO, April Lott, was awarded the Roy Deeb Service Award at ALPHA House of Pinellas County's Butterfly Ball, and DFL's MHFA Coordinator, Bonnie Morgan, was recognized at the National MHFA Summit as the Mental Health First Aid Coordinator of the Year Honorable Mention Recipient.



# FINANCIALS

Directions for Living  
LIFE GETS BETTER HERE.™

## REVENUE

Governmental/ Other Revenue	\$13,723,193
Program Revenue	\$5,237,045
Other Revenue	\$47,432
Contributions & Donations	\$225,520
In-Kind	\$686,372
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19,919,562</b>

## EXPENSES

Personnel Expense	\$15,283,110
Program Expense	\$2,080,783
Interest Expense	\$131,266
Telephone	\$100,854
Occupancy	\$776,832
Maintenance & Repairs	\$37,919
Equipment Rental	\$18,219
Dues & Subscriptions	\$57,505
Depreciation	\$241,916
Miscellaneous & In-Kind	\$720,727
Charity Care	\$199,859
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19,648,990</b>

## AWARDED GRANTS

### City of St. Petersburg

- \$250,000 for Homeless Prevention Services
- \$75,000 for Street Outreach and Homeless Prevention Services
- \$100,000 for Street Outreach Services

### Juvenile Welfare Board

- \$180,798 for facility improvements & tech

### Pinellas Community Foundation

- \$203,635 for facility improvements
- \$25,000 for charity care



# AMAZING THINGS THAT DONORS MADE POSSIBLE

## ANGELS AGAINST ABUSE

Supported several programs with critical in-kind donations, such as Welcome Home Kits for families transitioning out of homelessness, school uniforms, and essentials items (e.g., car seats, hygiene items) that provide stability, dignity, and hope for our families.

## SANTA'S ANGELS

Provided cozy beds and bedding through our Sweet Dreams program to ensure children have a safe and comfortable place to sleep, and nourishing food for our families facing food insecurity.

## LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE PALMS

Supported our HOME program by providing handmade quilts to keep those experiencing homelessness warm during the winter months, along with thousands of bagged lunches to help meet their immediate needs.

## ST. PETE FOOLS

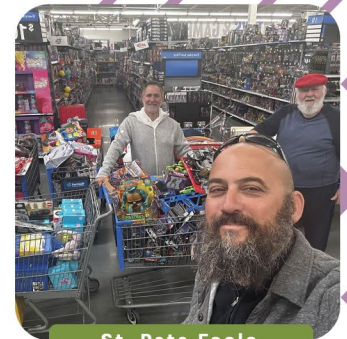
Brought joy to children during the holidays by providing gifts to those who might otherwise have gone without.

## BIKES FOR CHRIST

Provided bikes to clients, ensuring they have reliable transportation for work, doctor appointments, and grocery shopping—essential for fostering independence, stability, and access to critical resources.



Santa's Angels



St. Pete Fools



Bikes for Christ



## OUR GENEROUS DONORS

\*Donors with asterisks gave both monetary & in-kind donations

**TOGETHER** WE ARE

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE



As we reflect on Fiscal Year 2024, we are deeply grateful for the generosity that has driven our mission forward. Thanks to our incredible donors, dedicated partners, and compassionate team, we have delivered life-changing mental health care, substance misuse treatment, and homeless services to individuals and families in need. Together, we've expanded critical wraparound services, case management, and homeless outreach—ensuring people receive the support they need to rebuild their lives.

With your support, we've provided Welcome Home Kits for families transitioning out of homelessness, safe beds for children, and holiday gifts for hundreds of kids—bringing comfort and joy when it was needed most. This year's accomplishments demonstrate the power of collaboration to create a stronger, healthier, and more hopeful community. Thank you for making this impact possible.

### VISIONARY SOCIETY (\$20,000 and above)

Angels Against Abuse\*  
Gagnon Foundation\*  
Publix Super Markets, Inc.\*  
Roy & Ruth Weeks  
Santa's Angels\*  
Stahl & Associates Insurance

### FAMILY IMPACT SPONSORS (\$5,000 - \$9,999)

Florida Blue

### CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CLUB (\$1,000 - \$4,999)

April & Joe Lott\*  
Certipay  
Charities Aid Foundation America  
Flagship Bank  
Genoa Healthcare  
Hancock Whitney  
Mutual of America  
ProVise  
Republic Bank  
Rivero, Gordimer, & Co.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our anonymous donors whose generosity and compassion make a profound impact.

## OUR GENEROUS DONORS

### PARTNERS IN ACTION

(\$100 - \$999)

Advanced Green Technologies  
Jeff & Cicely Rathmell  
John and Anne Jones  
Judy Turnbaugh  
Kay Kitchen-Maran  
Ken Williams\*  
Lincoln Financial Group  
Maria East\*  
Milton Smith\*  
Team Borham  
Wawa Foundation  
Whiskey Wings

### PARTNERSHIP FUND

(\$100 - \$999)

Victor Alonso Sr.  
Madeleine Minetree\*  
Deborah Empey\*  
Roger Schofield\*  
Summer Gray\*  
Lisa Gagnon\*  
Donna Ensminger\*  
Nancy Ramey\*  
Susan Huerta\*  
Madeleine Entel\*  
Kristen Dawes\*

Danielle Magro\*  
Elissa Brady-Sheehan\*  
Valerie Steele\*  
Shani Young\*  
Tai Ku\*  
Alvin Bullard\*  
Jim & Shalimar Allen\*  
Martha Kapitz\*  
Judy Vesey\*  
Brittany Morton\*  
Taylor Davis\*

Angels Against Abuse has long supported Directions for Living, a partnership that has been incredibly rewarding to the Angels. We have significantly impacted programs like BabyCat, First Five, Youth Mental Health, Family Works, and our Christmas Giving initiative, benefiting countless children and families in our community. This collaboration enables us to make a meaningful difference for the children and families we advocate for throughout the year. Being part of this important work allows us to make a real difference in the community we care about.

-Sandy Kearney

President & Founder, Angels Against Abuse



Angels Against Abuse supported several programs with critical in-kind donations, such as Welcome Home Kits for families transitioning out of homelessness (pictured above)



## OUR GENEROUS DONORS

### FRIENDS OF DFL (In-kind donors)

4 Rivers Smokehouse

Alan Read

Ally Green

Amy Fichter

Aubrey Ehlers

Bikes for Christ

Bonnie Morgan

Cameron Mitchell Restaurants

CASA

Chamonix Grove

Christina Dickson

Clearwater Bar Association

Clearwater Marine Aquarium

Colleen Carroll

Courtney Burt

Crystal Cranor

Cynthia Marscher

Danielle Huntoon

Danielle Ladson

Denise Dabato

Dinosaur World

DripDrop

Dunedin Blue Jays

Erika Johnson

Family Resources

GU Gels

Gulfport Kiwanis

Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas  
& West Pasco Counties

Helen Alred

Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront

Jeila Alai

Joanne Osborn

Kati Yowell

Katie LaBonney

Keila Martin

Larson & Larson, P.A.

Latoya Brown

Laura Ezell

Lottie Cuthbertson

Lutheran Church of the Palms

Mariko Brandon

Marisa Maximous

Mazzaro's Italian Market

Melissa Bibb

Melissa Birch

Melissa Filippone

Mister Car Wash

Myrna Gulish

Mystical Moments Entertainment

Nancy Sidrow

Nicole Hoban

Oriental Trading Company

Orlando Family Stage

Patrice Epperly

Paula Shinaberry

Power Crunch

Priscilla Rima

Quinn Cohen

Rev Max

Shandrika Pritchett

Shelly Ballard

Sore No More

St. Anthony's Hospital

St. Pete Fools

Sunstar Paramedics

Susan Carey

Tampa Bay Buccaneers

Tampa Bay History Center

Tampa Bay Rays

Tampa Bay Rowdies

Taylor Meehan

Terrie Schofield

The Body Electric Yoga and  
Athletic Company

The Florida Aquarium

The Florida Museum of  
Natural History

Tijuana Flats

Top Golf St. Petersburg

Tracy Becker

Twincraft

Vera Suci

Zephyrhills

Zoo Tampa

## TRANSFORMATIONAL GIVING

### The Weeks Family Financial Assistance Program

We are deeply grateful to the Roy & Ruth Week's Trust for their extraordinary generosity and commitment to our mission. Their significant gift has played a vital role in expanding our Charity Care program, which ensures that no one in need of mental health services is turned away due to their inability to pay.

Thanks to this incredible support, individuals and families facing financial hardship can access life-changing care, including counseling, case management, and crisis intervention. This gift is more than just funding—it's a lifeline for those struggling with mental health challenges, substance misuse, and homelessness.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Roy & Ruth Week's Trust for believing in our mission and making a lasting difference in the lives of those who need it most.

TOGETHER WE ARE

**TRANSFORMING LIVES...**

THANK YOU.







DIRECTIONSFORLIVING.ORG  
727.524.4464



Directions for Living  
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FUNDED IN PART BY:



SPONSORED BY CENTRAL FLORIDA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NETWORK, INC.  
AND THE STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.