



July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

ANNUAL REPORT



CARE THAT CHANGES LIVES



This year has been incredibly hard for our family. We went from living in our car, to staying in a hotel, and nearly losing our vehicle altogether. Directions for Living truly made us feel human again. Working with my case manager has been life-changing. She keeps me on track, supports me, and empowers me to take control of my future. Because of this program, I feel hopeful and capable of building stability for my family."

-Housing First client



MISSION

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.

VISION

Thriving children.
Empowered adults.
Strong families.

VALUES

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.



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LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Fiscal Year 2025 tested all of us in ways we could not have anticipated. In the span of a single year, our community endured two major hurricanes, ongoing economic uncertainty, and a deeply charged political climate. Through it all, Directions for Living remained steadfast in our mission, showing up for individuals, families, and one another when it mattered most.

This year, we served more than 31,000 clients, many navigating extraordinary stress and instability. Our programs provided support and hope during a time when those resources were urgently needed. I am immensely proud of the impact our teams made for people facing some of the hardest moments of their lives.

Equally important was how we cared for our own. In the aftermath of hurricane devastation, we invested heavily in supporting our team members, the dedicated professionals doing this difficult, essential work every day. Their resilience, compassion, and commitment continue to define who we are as an organization.

FY 2025 also underscored our unwavering commitment to quality and continuous improvement. We achieved CARF accreditation with no recommendations (a distinction earned by only 3% of CARF surveys) reflecting the high standards our organization holds itself to every day. This accomplishment was driven by intentional investments in team member training, professional development, and evidence-based practices, as well as the dedication of team members whose work was recognized through multiple awards and honors throughout the year.

Despite a challenging year for everyone, I am proud of what we accomplished together. Our work mattered, and continues to matter, more than ever.

-April Lott
President & CEO



THANK YOU TO OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Katrina Griffith
Chair

Jeff Rathmell
Vice-Chair

Tony Pacheco

Christina Dickson
Treasurer

Teresa Conte
Secretary

Milton Smith



OUTPATIENT SERVICES

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



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 older adults experiencing homelessness in our community, aiming to stabilize their living situations and empower them towards self-sufficiency.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION

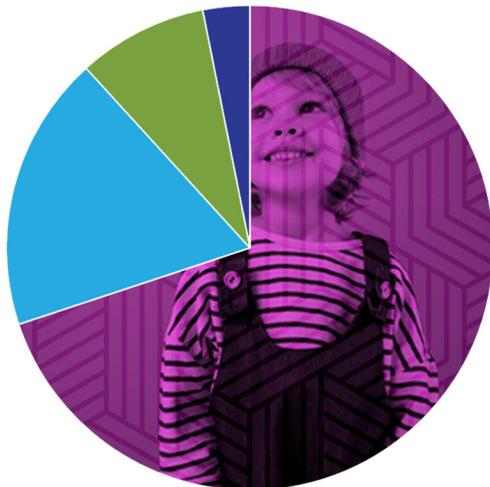
DFL understands that education is paramount in creating awareness, reducing stigma, and fostering understanding around mental health. We are dedicated to leading the conversation by providing important trainings and resources to our community.

31,054

CLIENTS SERVED

SERVICE SNAPSHOT

70% Outpatient Services
18% Housing First
9% Families First
3% Community Education



Care begins with a call:
More than **33,000** calls were answered
by our customer service team

OUR PROGRAMS

- Adult & Children's Therapy
- Adult & Children's Psychiatry and Medication Management
- Adult Case Management
- Group Therapy
- Certified Recovery Peer Specialist Services
- Psychological Testing
- Pinellas County Department of Health Co-located Behavioral Health Services
- Treatment Works
- Telehealth Remote Access to Crisis Evaluation (TRACE)
- Mental Health Court
- First Five
- Early Childhood Consultation (ECC)
- Together We Rise
- BabyCAT
- Family Intensive Treatment Team (FITT)
- Homeless Outreach Mobile Engagement (HOME)
- Family Works
- Targeted Prevention
- SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR)
- Mobile Medical Unit Behavioral Health Services (Health Care for the Homeless Program)
- Street Medicine Behavioral Health Services (Health Care for the Homeless Program)

Check out the following pages of this Annual Report for more powerful highlights from some of these life-changing programs.

OUR COMMITMENT TO QUALITY

CARF ACCREDITATION

DFL completed our 10th CARF accreditation survey in fiscal year 2025. CARF accreditation is a voluntary process that ensures health and human service providers are meeting quality and service standards. Directions for Living has had 9 successful 3-year accreditations, without a single interruption, since our first one in 1997.

DFL's 2025 report identified no recommendations, an accomplishment that is achieved on only 3% of CARF surveys.

PRAESIDIUM GUARDIANS

Two members of our team earned certification as Praesidium Guardians, an advanced designation focused on preventing abuse, strengthening organizational practices, and protecting those we serve. Their achievement reflects our ongoing dedication to quality, integrity, and creating safe environments for every child and family in our care.

[Click here to learn more about Praesidium.](#)



[Click here to learn more about CARF](#)

OUTPATIENT SERVICES IMPACT

CLIENTS SERVED BY PROGRAM

Outpatient Services: 10,919

Medical Services: 6,237

Targeted Case Management: 844

Mental Health Court: 248

Treatment Works: 1,751

**Pinellas County Department
of Health:** 1,707

DFL is co-located in all of Pinellas County Health Departments, providing integrated health care to adults within their chosen medical home. This includes access to counseling, case management, and psychiatric services.



Mental Health Court: 90% jail diversion rate

In partnership with the Judiciary, the State Attorney's Office, and the Public Defender's office, this program reduces the number of individuals with mental illness who repeatedly enter the criminal justice system by diverting them to appropriate, effective mental health and supportive services. [Click here to learn more about this life-changing program.](#)

TRACE: 88.2% hospital diversion rate

TRACE is a program that allows Law Enforcement Officers to have immediate access to DFL counselors while in the field responding to our community's emergency calls.

RESPONDING IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Our team provided Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) responses on six occasions, offering timely support to individuals and teams affected by traumatic or high-stress events. Through these responses, we helped people process difficult experiences, reduce long-term stress impacts, and begin the path toward healing and resilience.



TREATMENT WORKS STORY

Ky entered the Treatment Works program with serious behavioral challenges at home, including frequent conflict, rule refusal, and strained family relationships. Communication was limited and often combative.

With consistent support focused on coping skills, self-worth, and healthy communication, Ky made strong progress. He learned to handle conflict calmly, take accountability, and communicate respectfully. As a result, his behavior improved, emotional regulation increased, and family relationships grew stronger.

"It's almost like you helped me do a factory reset on my own kid! I've been getting hugs, "I love you," good night wishes, "yes ma'am," help without asking for it... I truly have so much love for Directions. Thank You."

-Ky's mother



FAMILIES FIRST IMPACT

TOGETHER WE RISE

124 kids diverted from child welfare system

Together We Rise delivers intensive, in-home Wraparound™ support to families with children at high risk of maltreatment, helping prevent out-of-home placement.

BABYCAT

100% of children served did not enter out-of-home foster care

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 served 256 clients in FY'25.

FITT

\$2,346,750 saved for circuit 6 child welfare system in out-of-home costs

Our Family Intensive Treatment Team (FITT) works to reunify families who have entered the child welfare system due to substance misuse. 192 clients were served.

FIRST FIVE

13 EARLY LEARNING CENTERS & 142 KIDS SERVED

First Five equips early learning teachers with trauma-informed tools to strengthen classroom culture and better support children 0-5 years old and their families.



Recognizing Outstanding Service: KidsFirst Cooperman-Bogue Award

DFL team member, Gabriella Moran was celebrated as Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County's quarterly KidsFirst Cooperman-Bogue Award winner. This important award recognizes outstanding social services professionals who provide direct services and work tirelessly to put children first.

As a Classroom Consultant for DFL's First Five program, Gabriella works to stabilize our community's littlest learners who have experienced trauma at home, and prevent behavior-based expulsions to keep them in their learning environment, while also educating their caregivers and preventing further traumatization.

Trauma Experts: DFL in the media

ABC Action News Tampa Bay interviewed our President & CEO, April Lott, about the correlation between childhood trauma and future health outcomes. Click [here](#) to watch April discuss ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and the importance of breaking cycles of violence and trauma through resilience, acknowledgment, and access to care.



HOUSING FIRST IMPACT

Homeless Outreach Mobile Engagement (HOME): 1,687 individuals engaged

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

SOAR: \$197,784 awarded in SSI and/or SSDI

SOAR brought a total of \$197,784 annually to 45 individuals deemed to be disabled due to a mental illness. These dollars are life changing and allow people with disabilities to live happy, healthy, and independent lives.

Targeted Prevention: Prevented 70 families from eviction

70 households, including 181 children, were assisted with past due rent and utilities, keeping them from experiencing a housing crisis.

Family Works: 155 children housed

This program works with children and their families identified by the school system to achieve housing stability. In fiscal year 2025, Family Works housed 33 families, including 155 children.

[Click here to learn more about our Housing First services and how we help local families.](#)



HOUSING FIRST IMPACT

“

This support made such a huge difference for me and my children. We are beyond grateful for Directions for Living and their generosity. Not only were we provided safe shelter, but the team also made sure we had something special to give our children for Christmas, which meant everything to us. In a time of uncertainty, Directions helped us maintain joy and dignity for our family, and that will never be forgotten.”

-Targeted Prevention Client



Restoring Hope: DFL in the media

Spectrum Bay News 9 did a story on the success of our 2024 Adopt a Family holiday campaign. [Click here](#) to watch how our community comes together to show up for families in need.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION IMPACT



Mental Health First Aid: 2,345 individuals trained

Mental Health First Aid is an 8-hour course designed to help participants identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness. 2,345 individuals were certified in FY 2025 including:



344 First Responders

783 Spanish-Speaking Learners

349 Pinellas & Hillsborough County Teens

CIT: 156 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 in our community.

Verbal De-Escalation: 172 individuals trained

Verbal De-escalation training helps customer service professionals better interact and assist individuals who are upset or may be experiencing a mental health crisis.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION IMPACT

National Recognition: Top MHFA Instructor in the U.S.

Shani Young, DFL's Director of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), was recognized as a top MHFA Instructor in the nation in 2024 for teaching the most Mental Health First Aiders of anyone in Florida. She was recognized at the national MHFA Summit ceremony.

[Click here to register for a
Mental Health First Aid course](#)

92%

of learners are confident in having a supportive conversation with anyone about mental health or substance use challenges after taking the MHFA course



A CULTURE OF SUPPORT

At Directions for Living, our culture is grounded in care, connection, and compassion. We believe that when our team members feel supported and valued, they are better equipped to support the children and families we serve. From prioritizing well-being to fostering open communication, we are committed to creating a workplace where people can grow, belong, and thrive.



INTRODUCED IN FISCAL YEAR 2025

Professional Learning:

102 Team Members attended conferences

With a renewed focus on conference participation, we supported attendance at local and national conferences to foster learning, connection, and innovation.

Tuition Reimbursement:

We launched a tuition reimbursement program to support team members in child-serving programs pursuing higher education and professional credentials.

AI Implementation:

We began integrating artificial intelligence tools to streamline workflows and enhance efficiency, allowing our team to spend more time on mission-critical, human-centered work.

Maternity Leave & Wellness Days:

We introduced maternity leave to better support growing families during one of life's most important transitions.

DFL provided team members with 22 paid holiday and wellness days in 2025 to promote rest and self care.

A CULTURE OF SUPPORT

HURRICANE RESPONSE

In the aftermath of 2024's devastating hurricanes, Directions for Living prioritized the well-being of our team. We ensured continuity of pay during storm-related disruptions, provided support to team members impacted by food loss, childcare challenges, housing instability, or transportation issues, and advocated with local funders and community partners for the essential role of "second-tier first responders," including emergency mental health and high-risk social services providers.



On October 9th, when Hurricane Milton came to Tampa, my house had two feet of water in it and half of everything I own was destroyed. It was unliveable for about six weeks and Directions for Living offered me unbelievable support. A week in an Airbnb when I had no place to go and financial support from a charity that April is involved with that allowed me to buy new furniture and new clothing. It allowed me to put my life back together when it was shredded. DFL really stepped up to help. I've worked at a lot of different agencies and I've never had this kind of support."

-Meredith, DFL Team Member



FINANCIALS

REVENUE

Governmental/ Other Revenue	\$15,008,744
Program Revenue	\$3,749,037
Other Revenue	\$22,964
Contributions & Donations	\$1,411,146
Restricted donations	\$41,770,000
In-Kind	\$956,780
Total	\$62,918,671

EXPENSES

Personnel Expense	\$16,791,562
Program Expense	\$3,333,608
Interest Expense	\$54,488
Telephone	\$111,348
Occupancy	\$832,442
Maintenancy & Repairs	\$38,218
Equipment Rental	\$18,404
Dues & Subscriptions	\$46,265
Depreciation	\$354,382
Miscellaneous & In-Kind	\$956,780
Total	\$22,537,497

AWARDED GRANTS

City of St. Petersburg

- \$100,000 for Street Outreach Services
- \$75,000 for Storage Lockers for Street Outreach Services
- \$484,827 for Homeless Prevention Assistance
- \$151,832 for CCBHC Readiness

Juvenile Welfare Board

- \$152,000 for Eleos AI Implementation

Pinellas Community Foundation

- \$25,000 for charity care





PB&J RUN

Our signature fundraiser, the PB&J Run presented by Publix, drew 1,500 runners to Albert Whitted Park in St. Petersburg and raised a record-breaking \$85,000 in support of DFL. The energy, enthusiasm, and community spirit on display made it one of our most memorable events to date.



LITTLE LIGHTS

In April 2025, we proudly hosted our inaugural Child Abuse Prevention Month event, Little Lights. More than 150 friends of DFL gathered at Fat Beet Farm to stand in solidarity for children and families. The event marked an important step forward in raising awareness and building momentum for child abuse prevention.



ADOPT A FAMILY

Through our Adopt a Family program, we provided holiday gifts to 502 children, made possible by the generosity of our donors and community partners. Together, we helped ensure hundreds of families experienced joy, dignity, and hope during the holiday season.



DU

Our signature internal event, DU, brought our team together for a full day of training, connection, and celebration of the incredible people behind our mission. The event reinforced our shared commitment to growth, collaboration, and caring for one another as we care for our community.

[Click here to watch a fun video from the event.](#)

OUR GENEROUS DONORS

*Donors with asterisks gave both monetary and in-kind donations

A Year of Impact, Resilience, and Hope

As we reflect on Fiscal Year 2025, we are deeply grateful for the generosity that continues to move our mission forward. Your support takes many meaningful forms, from legacy gifts honoring loved ones and generous contributions to events like our annual PB&J Run, to monthly giving, Giving Tuesday support, and in-kind donations that meet immediate needs. No matter how you give to Directions for Living, your impact is deeply felt, making it possible for thousands of individuals and families to receive life-changing mental health care, substance misuse treatment, housing support, and wraparound services.

This year also tested our community's resilience. In the wake of back-to-back hurricanes, donors and partners stepped up in extraordinary ways to ensure care continued for those who needed it most. We are especially grateful to organizations like St. Pete Fools, whose swift and compassionate support helped provide relief during a time of uncertainty. Through the compassion of many, these acts of generosity ensured that individuals, families, and our frontline teams were not alone during crisis.

Amid these challenges, donors also helped bring our community together through moments of hope and connection, including the launch of our inaugural Little Lights event in honor of Child Abuse Prevention. Throughout the year, your compassion was felt in countless practical ways, from Welcome Home Kits and bagged lunches for street outreach to school supplies, food, and essentials for families facing hardship. These acts of care strengthened dignity, stability, and hope across our community. Thank you for standing with us and making this collective impact possible.

LEGACY CIRCLE (\$250,000 and above)

The Ruth Weeks Foundation
Anonymous

VISIONARY SOCIETY (\$20,000 and above)

Angels Against Abuse*
Santa's Angels*
St. Pete Fools*
Publix Super Markets, Inc.*
Stahl & Associates Insurance

CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE (\$10,000 – \$19,999)

Gagnon Foundation
Florida Blue
Beth Houghton &
Scott Wagman

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

April & Joe Lott
Servis 1st Bank
Dimmitt Chevrolet
Anonymous

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

OUR GENEROUS DONORS

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

Shannon Sheridan
Genevieve Lykes and Lawrence
Dimmitt Family Foundation
Charities Aid Foundation of
America
Rivero, Gordimer & Co.
KAM Roofing
Hancock Whitney
Keller Williams
Gratzzi Italian Grille
First Nonprofit
Genoa Healthcare
The Body Electric
Flagship Bank
Team Borham
All First Responders Matter
MHRRG & Negley Associates
Samantha Spann*
Jeff & Cicely Rathmell
Sabal Trust
Windmoor Healthcare
St. Anthony's Hospital
Doug Brunn
Eleos
Baycare
Valley Bank
Hands Across the Bay

PARTNERS IN ACTION (\$100 - \$999)

Nastassja Louis
Global Painting
Advanced Green Technologies
Orlando Health Bayfront
Healthcare
Amwins Brokerage
The Wawa Foundation
Tai Ku
Certipay
Selectsource
Maria East
Eugene Monje
Habitat For Humanity
Micki Thompson Kiefhaber
Jack Day
David Boyum
Finn Kavanagh
Teresa & Tony Pacheco
Christina Garaway
Sangita Desai
Ruth Brown-Richards
Alvin Bullard
Sunrise Irrigation
Kathleen Beckman
Renee Carter-Gura
Kerri McManus

Lanita Duvall
Charles Imbergamo
John and Lisa Alchin
Jenn Whealey
Carrie Cabera
Ken Williams
Barry & Toni Scarr



"The Body Electric values opportunities that bring people together around care, connection, and community. Supporting Directions for Living was meaningful to us because their work genuinely reflects those values. The Little Lights Sunset Social allowed The BE to connect more deeply with Directions for Living's mission and the community they serve. We're grateful to support their work with children and families."

-Kristina Rich, Partnership Manager
The Body Electric Yoga

OUR GENEROUS DONORS

PARTNERSHIP FUND

(\$1 - \$99)

Summer Gray*
Michael Amoris
Juan Maruqsa
Ed Patissi
Kalli Parianos
Kelly Moseley
Joyce Frustaci
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Kathleen Croy
Tammy Brigmond
Grace Johnson*
Nadya McGregor
Andrea Cunha
Nancy Preising
Lisa Gagnon*
David Key
Valerie Steele
Kaela Harron

FRIENDS OF DFL

(In-kind donors)

Kimberly Home
Gail and Clay Hutchinson
Gisella & Benjamin Mallah
Pinellas County
Bikes for Christ
Anonymous (turkey donation)
Lutheran Church of the Palms
Clearwater Sports Massage
American Running Company
Tamik Entertainment
Drip Drop
Feet First
Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront
Nothing Bundt Cakes
Sore No More
Squirrel Nut Butter
St. Pete Running Company
Zephyrhills
Frankie Raye
Fat Beet Farm
LeShayne Maddex
Gina Parson
Jessica Williams
Rev Max
Erika Johnson
Helen Alred

Praveen Tadayon
Patrice Epperly
Kathy Niemann
Ally Green
Shelly Ballard
Jacqueline Martinez
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Danielle McFadden
Nancy Preising
Quinn Cohen
Elana Padro
Mikaila Joseph
Jillian Harris
Kathleen Croy
Priscilla Rima
Brooke Bradshaw
Aubrey Ehlers
Kaela Harron

OUR GENEROUS DONORS

FRIENDS OF DFL continued (In-kind donors)

Melissa Bibb
Katrina Griffith
Amy Fichter
Nicole Hoban
Patricia Archambault
Gisella Mallah
Marissa Maximus
Teresa Conte
Christina Kane
Christina Dickson
Ali Jones
Madison Temple
Andrea Cunha
Heather's Traveling
Canvas
4 Rivers Smokehouse
American Victory
Ship and Museum
Anytime Fitness
Columbia Restaurants
Florida Aquarium
Florida Museum of
Photographic Arts
Glazer Children's
Museum
Great Explorations
Hampton Chocolate
Factory

Imagine Museum
Kahwa Coffee
Mister Car Wash
MOSI
Orlando Family Stage
Orlando Philharmonic
Ruth Eckerd Hall
Starlite Cruises
Sunken Gardens
Tampa Bay Buccaneers
Tijuana Flats
Wawa Foundation
Yacht Starship
ZooTampa



TRANSFORMATIONAL GIVING

We are profoundly grateful to Alexis who chose to support our mission through a legacy gift in FY25, inspired by the care her family member has received from Directions for Living for more than 20 years. Alexis shared that she cannot imagine what her loved one's life would look like without the consistent, compassionate services provided over the decades and wanted to ensure that same care remains available for others in the future.

This extraordinary commitment reflects the lasting impact of accessible, relationship-centered care. By including Directions for Living in her trust, Alexis is helping sustain our mission for generations to come, ensuring individuals and families continue to receive the support, dignity, and stability they deserve.

Legacy gifts like this are transformational. They provide long-term strength and flexibility, allowing us to respond to evolving community needs while honoring the trust placed in us by those we serve. We extend our heartfelt gratitude for this meaningful act of generosity and belief in our mission and for creating a legacy that will continue to change lives for years to come.



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727.524.4464



Directions for Living
LIFE GETS BETTER HERE.™

FUNDED IN PART BY



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