



America's Kids
BELONG

2021

IMPACT REPORT

CONTENTS

OUR STAKE IN IMPROVING FOSTER CARE IN OUR COMMUNITIES.....	3
A FAMILY FOR EVERY CHILD.....	4-5
A COMMUNITY FOR EVERY FAMILY.....	6
HOPE FOR EVERY COMMUNITY.....	7
2021 IMPACT.....	8-9
LETTER FROM OUR CEO.....	10-11
FINANCIALS.....	12
DONORS AND STATE TEAMS.....	14
JOE RITCHIE TRIBUTE AND NATIONAL TEAM.....	15

Hundreds of thousands of kids are suffering in foster care in America. We're dramatically changing their experiences and improving their outcomes by connecting them with safe and loving families where they belong.

WE ALL HAVE A STAKE IN IMPROVING FOSTER CARE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Why does an amazing boy like Brandon enter foster care at age seven and remain in the system well into his teens?

What is it like to live with the risk each day of being separated from your siblings?

And why does a motivated young man like Nathan decide to age out and go it alone, rather than risk the rejection of seeking adoption at age 17?

These are the stories we at America's Kids Belong lean into every day — stories of powerful young people who, through no fault of their own, find themselves separated from their families of origin. The resulting pain, trauma and isolation diminishes their self-worth, leaves them vulnerable, and risks their opportunity to live wholeheartedly into their very best versions of themselves that comes from belonging.





A FAMILY FOR EVERY CHILD

MORE THAN 400,000 KIDS ARE IN THE U.S. FOSTER CARE SYSTEM;
100,000 OF THEM ARE ELIGIBLE FOR ADOPTION.

Family Engagement

Imagine waking up to a phone call in the middle of the night and by morning you've added two new siblings to your family for an indeterminate period of time.

The kids show up sleepy-eyed, traumatized and heartbroken. You've got to help them settle in, find daycare or school and set two more places at the dinner table, all while learning to walk alongside them through their emotional, and sometimes physical, pain. That's a challenging, "Yes."

One of the most valuable ways your investment in America's Kids Belong works is to increase awareness of the critical need for foster parents and the valuable impact they can make in the life of a child.

We begin by engaging child-welfare agencies at the state and/or county level, seeking to understand their needs and partner to find creative ways to lend support. In many cases this involves raising awareness of the foster care crisis and the need for more foster parents.



Help Children Eligible For Adoption Move From Foster Care To Forever Families

The *I Belong Project* hosts fun and therapeutic video shoots where creative videos and professional photography give a face and voice to harder-to-place children in foster care. These youth are legally free to be adopted.

America's Kids Belong partners with Departments of Children's Services / Social Services to amplify the children's voices, stories and dreams of a forever family.

Last year we produced 512 amazing stories that contributed to 310 children being placed in permanent, adoptive homes.



"I can be thankful for my adoption and wish it didn't have to happen."

– Tina Bauer

These videos ripple across the thousands of people who view their heartwarming stories each year. Some donate or volunteer, others feel inspired to explore fostering and still others engage their churches and businesses to become foster friendly.





A FOSTER FRIENDLY COMMUNITY FOR EVERY FAMILY

Community Engagement

Kinship and foster families are the first responders who show up in the midst of crisis to stand in the gap for a hurting, vulnerable child or sibling group.

Each step of the way kinship and foster families embrace the role of healer – of hearts, bodies and minds. Sadly, nearly half stop fostering within the first year, often citing **a lack of community and social support**.

We partner with business, civic and faith organizations to build foster friendly communities where kinship and foster families receive the encouragement, support and resources they need to thrive.

Foster Friendly App

Our Foster Friendly App connects families with exclusive discounts and services.

Last year your support enabled nearly 2,500 foster and kinship families to take advantage of everything from a weeknight discount on dinner to restorative self-care services for weary foster moms.

Foster friendly faith communities provide trauma training to their care givers to ensure their communities are safe and welcoming. They preach about foster care and encourage members to consider fostering, and they host programs like Kinship/Foster Parents' Night Out to give families a safe respite.

"Most people want to connect their work with something greater than a paycheck. America's Kids Belong helps companies get involved in making an impact on the 10 largest social issues our communities face by helping kids in foster care get out of the system and into caring families. We all can make a difference, and this program works."

*– Jeff Riley
Business Owner, Colorado*

HOPE FOR EVERY COMMUNITY

Collective Impact

Building foster friendly communities, where government, business, faith and civic communities bring their strengths and influence together to improve the experience and outcomes of kids in foster care creates a powerful collective impact on the well-being and strength of the community as a whole.

Last year we helped launch three governors' campaigns in South Dakota, Tennessee, and Utah. When governors move foster care high on their agendas it helps marshal the attention, resources and support needed to drive change. Hard-working child-welfare professionals engage with America's Kids Belong and enable us to:

- **Assist in recruiting more foster parents.**
- **Support families with foster friendly civic and faith communities to offer a safe haven for foster parents.**

- **Invite businesses to participate in the Foster Friendly App and lend additional support as business impact partners.**

As awareness grows, more people say yes to fostering, while still others say yes to showing up for these kids and their families. Soon an entire community is saying yes to the importance of standing in the gap for kids in need, knowing that in helping these kids reach their full potential they're also creating a stronger community for us all.



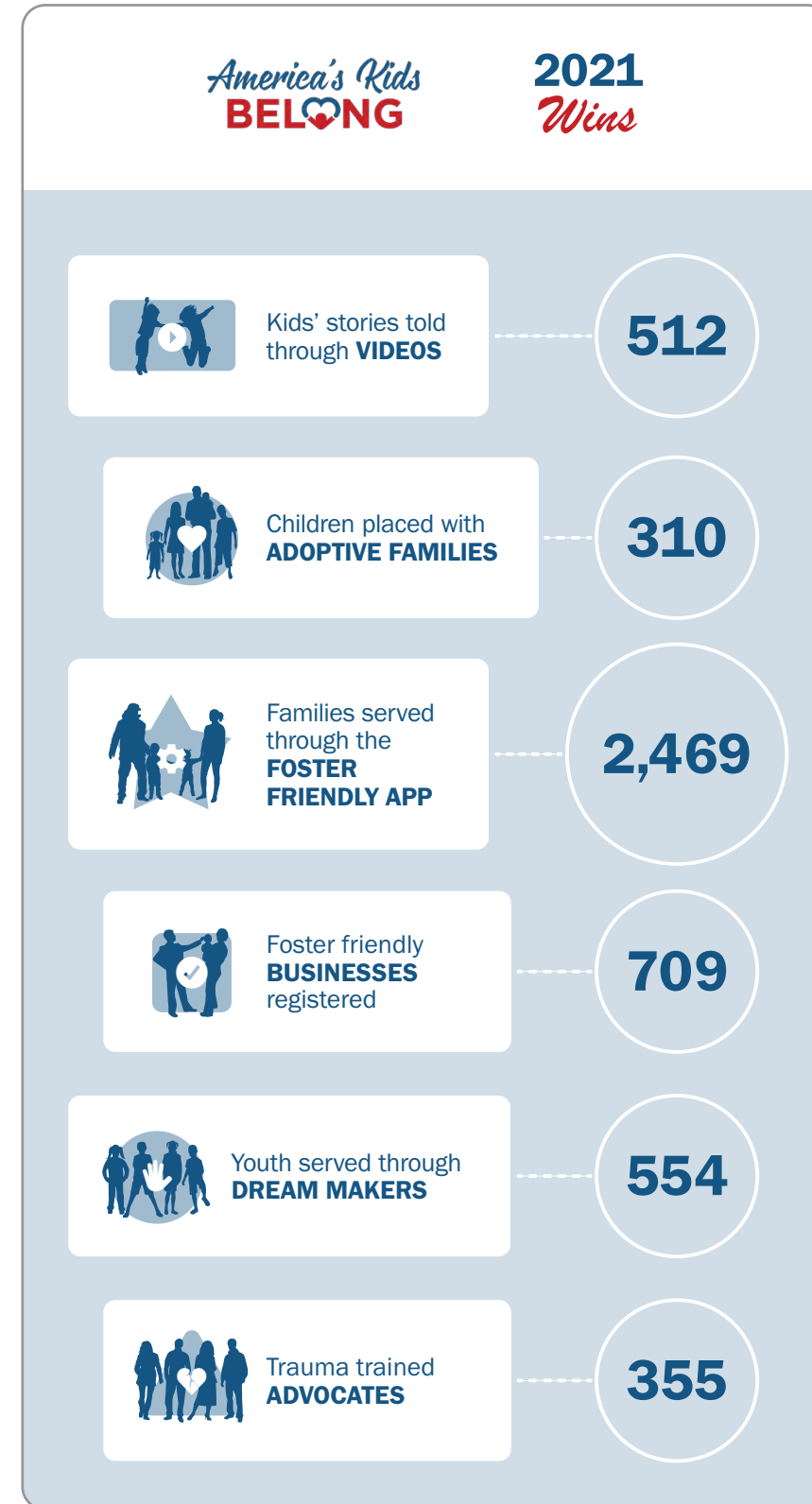
South Dakota Lt. Governor Larry Rhoden, South Dakota Belongs Leaders Kristi and Damen Woolsey and South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem



2021 IMPACT BY STATE



2021 IMPACT



LETTER FROM THE CEO

2022 FOCUS AREAS

To the friends of America's Kids Belong,

Thank you for all that you did in 2021 to help us improve the experience and outcomes for kids in foster care across America.

In my first full year as CEO I've broadened my perspective on the need and urgency of our mission; a perspective that started with my own family's life-changing story – the story of fostering and adopting five-year-old "Bubba." Over the past year, I've gained a broader, national perspective on 400,000 stories like Bubba's that are repeated in counties and states across our country every day.

Many individuals and organizations are committed to addressing the foster-care crisis across three stages:

Prevention

The top priority always is to provide the resources and support families need to offer children a safe, healthy environment, and avoid the pain and trauma of separation. Kinship placement can be a helpful way to sustain family ties.

Foster Care and Adoption

When those options are not available, foster care is an opportunity for temporary, caring parents to stand in the gap with a child (or sibling group) until the family can heal and reunify. Unfortunately of the 400,000 kids in foster care, more than 100,000 kids, 25 percent, are in need of permanent adoptive families.

Transition

At 18 kids legally are considered adults and "age out" of foster care. Without support these young people are at much greater risk for homelessness, addiction, justice-involvement, under-employment, under-education, and other obstacles to achieving their full potential.

As America's Kids Belong grows and seeks to scale our impact, we've also continually challenged our strategic focus and where we are best positioned for impact. **We believe we are uniquely equipped to unite government, business and faith organizations to impact foster care and adoption.**

Foster Friendly

Our foster friendly movement recognizes that foster parents are the "first responders," showing up in that moment of crisis to provide urgently needed shelter and support. But just like other emergency situations, it takes a team to ensure the best outcomes long-term.

Our Foster Friendly App is a ground-breaking, innovative tool for connecting foster parents to their communities, offering access to a broad range of discounts, services and foster friendly resources in their neighborhoods and communities. Our goal is to rapidly scale the scope and number of resources available nationwide.

In May we will launch our first foster friendly Community campaign to build awareness in participating states and counties that we all have a stake in ensuring our kids in foster care thrive. We believe this is the seed to a national

movement that will grow in reach and impact year over year.

The metrics detailed in this report offer a quick snapshot of how we are stewarding your investment for maximum impact. I invite you to consider how to increase your investment this year as we advance our foster friendly movement until:

- ♥ **Every child has a family;**
- ♥ **Every family has a community;**
- ♥ **Bringing hope for every community.**

Will you join us in the goal of making every community foster friendly?

Best,



“We believe we are uniquely equipped to unite government, business and faith organizations to impact foster care and adoption.”

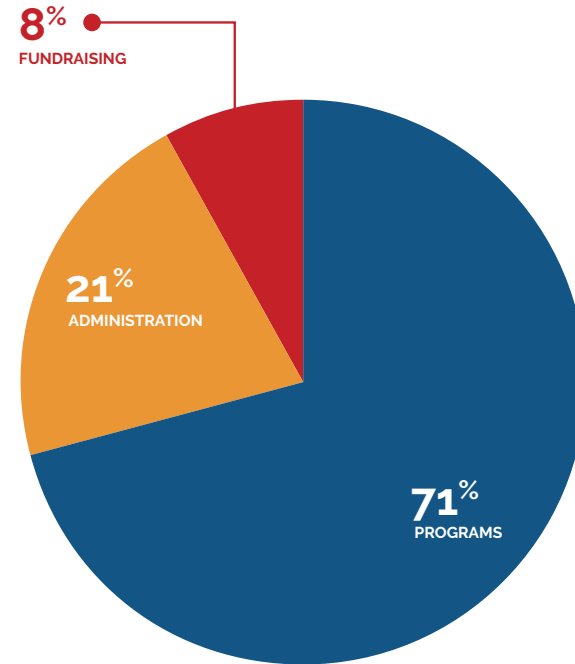
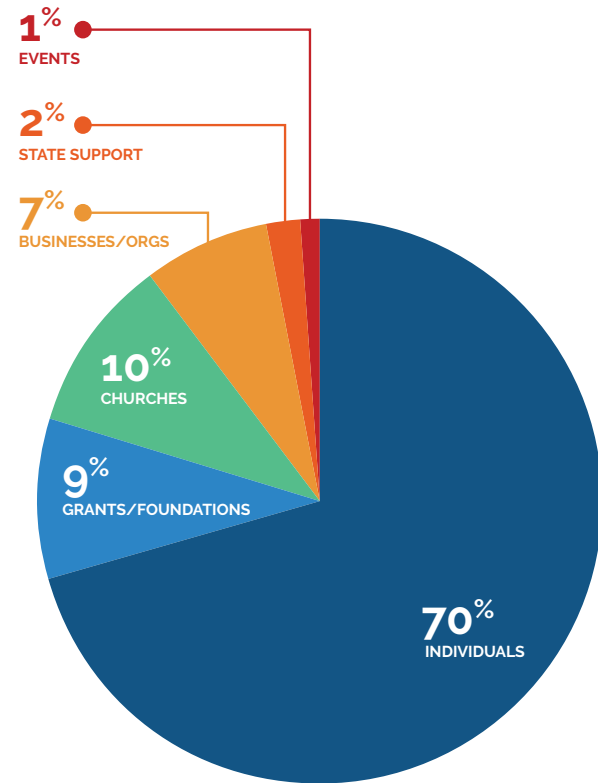
FINANCIALS

Total Expenses: \$ 1,846,477.39

Total income: \$2,068,182.53

INCOME BY DONOR SOURCE

EXPENSES BY SOURCE



Total Donors:



First time donors:



Monthly donors:



THANK YOU

Donors

All of our work is made possible by the generous support of so many donors and supporters. Thank you from the AKB team for your continued investment.

State Teams

AFFILIATES

SOUTH DAKOTA KIDS BELONG STAFF

- Jenni Bowen–Region 2 Community Catalyst - WRAP Support
- Kate Thompson–Operations Manager
- Carly Winterstein–Project Manager
- Damen Woolsey–Executive Director
- Kristi Woolsey–State Wrap Director

TENNESSEE KIDS BELONG STAFF

- Kristin Allender–Executive Director
- Carmen Brown–Social Media Coordinator
- Katie Dunlap–Community Relations, West Tennessee
- Megan Epps–Operations Manager
- Emily Graffius–Community Relations Coordinator, TN Valley
- Cyndi Higgins–Project and Events Manager
- Tiffany Kelley–Associate Director
- Kristin Miller–Community Relations Coordinator, East Tennessee
- Javian Shipley

VIRGINIA'S KIDS BELONG STAFF

- Kate Ashby Bachta–I Belong Project™ Manager
- Steve Hammond–Faith Community Liaison
- Emily Moser-Wright–Program Support
- Karen Parsons–Director of Community Engagement
- Matt Verlander–VA Appalachian Highlands Community Engagement Coordinator

PILOTS

CALIFORNIA KIDS BELONG STAFF

Connie Lannom–Pilot Manager

COLORADO KIDS BELONG STAFF

- Sheila Adkins–Intern
- Leah Cano–Foster Care Trainer
- Ashley Cox–Regional Community Engagement Manager
- Britt Kelley–Regional Community Engagement Manager
- Corrie Kraft–Team Coordinator and Trainer
- Tracee Rudd–State Director, Colorado
- Courtney Williams–I Belong Project™ Manager & Larimer Recruiter

GEORGIA KIDS BELONG STAFF

Rebecca Radicchi–Pilot Manager

INDIANA KIDS BELONG STAFF

- Alyssa Clark–Regional Community Engagement Manager
- Larry May–State Director
- Bethany Telle–Project and Events Manager

KANSAS KIDS BELONG STAFF

Lacy Paredes–I Belong Project™ Manager

KENTUCKY KIDS BELONG STAFF

Dayna Gleason–Pilot Manager

UTAH KIDS BELONG STAFF

- Brynn Bailey–Manager
- Brianna Bray–Manager
- Melissa Cannon Johnson–State Director
- Brad Johnson–Creative Director

TRIBUTE TO JOE RITCHIE

We would like to pause and pay tribute to a co-founder, board member, donor and champion, Joe Ritchie, who passed away February 22, 2022 at the age of 75.

Joe's life adventures covered the globe, but a consistent theme was his belief that the scarcest resource on earth was exceptional human capital. At the heart of many of Joe's course-altering ventures were high-character, high-capacity leaders that he could bring tailwind behind.

Joe had come to believe, through practice, that you could unlock huge value by getting the 'three-legged stool' — business, faith, and government— activated. After setting out on a hunt to find "game-changers" in the child-welfare sector, Joe came across those leaders with a track record in the faith and government spheres. He realized he could add the business element, and together they set out to end the crisis in foster care.



Joe's deep-seated belief in the team, from his co-founders to the newest volunteer, marked Joe's impact on America's Kids Belong. Joe had significant public success in various fields, but his intensity to engage with the team and give them the belief that they had what it takes to make a dent in a complex, challenging issue like AKB's mission, gave significant tailwind to us all, ultimately helping achieve all the organization has done to date.

We will forever be grateful for Joe's commitment to our team and to America's children in foster care.

National Team

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Todd Kinzle, CEO

Brian Mavis, Co-Founder and President

Julie Mavis, Co-Founder and VP of Programs

Kristin Allender, VP of State Success

Janet Kelly, Co-Founder and Special Advisor

Nanette Kirsch, VP Marketing and Communications

STAFF

Lisel Atherton—I Belong Project™ Director

Amy Booth—Operations & Dream Coordinator, Dream Makers Project

Leah Busboom—SalesForce Administrator and Operations

Brian Edman—I Belong Project™ Creative Director

Elle Flowers—Social Media Director

Marty Hyde—Operations

Shelby Merten—I Belong Project™ Manager

Krista Petty—Foster Friendly Director

Laurie Zauche—Senior Director of Operations, Headquarters

YOUR SUPPORT IS CHANGING THE EXPERIENCES AND OUTCOMES OF KIDS IN FOSTER CARE

Your support of America's Kids Belong helps fund our mission of improving the experiences and outcomes of kids in foster care.

Your continued investment will help improve our services and scale our presence to new states in 2022. Will you please take a moment to evaluate your investment in the kids and families served by America's Kids Belong and consider increasing your commitment to help fund our first Foster Friendly Month this May?

This May Foster Friendly Month will leverage Foster Care Awareness Month to invite faith communities to become foster friendly by committing to two of the following three best practices:

1. **Teaching on foster care/adoption**
2. **Becoming trauma aware; and**
3. **Supporting a ministry to care for foster care/adoptive families in their communities.**

Thank you for your support!

Donate

Payments can be made via check payable to:

America's Kids Belong

1540 Main St.

Unit 218, #331

Windsor, CO 80550

Or online at: americaskidsbelong.org

[DONATE NOW >](#)



America's Kids
BELONG

AMKIDSBELONG.ORG