



2023-2024

# ANNUAL REPORT

Breaking Cycles of Abuse and Transforming  
Trajectories for Miami-Dade's Youth in Foster Care





# ABOUT US

## MISSION-DRIVEN AND VISION FORWARD

In 2023-2024 (July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024) **Voices For Children Foundation** (Voices) made significant strides in **breaking intergenerational cycles of abuse and neglect while transforming the lives of children in Miami-Dade's foster care system**. Guided by our mission to provide advocacy, essential needs and positive experiences for abused and neglected youth plus our vision for every child to have access to quality representation and resources, we remained steadfastly committed to systemic change. Thanks to the unwavering support of our donors and partners, Miami-Dade's children in the foster care system continued to receive advocacy and system navigation towards ensuring their brighter futures!

## MISSION

Voices For Children Foundation, Inc. is a beacon of hope for abused, abandoned and neglected children and youth in the Miami-Dade County foster care system. We do this by providing critical support for advocacy, essential needs and positive experiences.

## VISION

Voices For Children Foundation, Inc. believes that support for children should not be a privilege. Our Vision is that every child in the foster care system has advocacy and fully centralized access to services and resources to meet their physical, social and emotional needs.



# VOICES FOR CHILDREN BOARD

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair of the Board: Kira Grossman, Esq., *Grossman & De La Fuente*

Chair-Elect: Brad Meltzer, *Two Roads Development*

Immediate Past Chair: Vince Castro, *Hotaling Insurance Services*

Secretary: Angel Ferrer, *Merrill Private Wealth Management*

Treasurer: John L. Broe, *Cudlob Capital*

## OFFICERS

Jay Shapiro, Esq., *Stearns Weaver Miller*

Blain L. Heckaman, *Kaufman, Rossin & Co.*

Michael N. Rosenberg, D.D.S., *Retired Orthodontist*

## DIRECTORS

Deborah Annex, *Philanthropist*

Ivette Augusti, *Premier Properties, LLC & I Am Equilibrium*

Javier Aviñó, Esq., *Bilzin Sumberg*

David G. Barbeito, CPA, *De La Hoz, Perez & Barbeito, P.A.*

Elise Betancourt, *Child Advocate*

Michael Block, *BrandsOne*

Ilana Yuz Brodsky, *BNY Mellon Wealth Management*

Juan D. Cordoba, AAI, CRIS, *USI Insurance Services*

Bertha A. Cordoves-Pino, *Child Advocate*

Jessica Cristobal, *Leading Ladies League*

Ivonne Dorrego, *Amerant Bank*

Stuart Fort, *Philanthropist*

Jay Fritz, *Northern Trust Corporation*

Elisa Gibellini, Esq., *Falco Electronics*

Nicole Gomez-Goldmeier, *LSN Partners*

Ron Goncalves, *Nomi Health*

Christopher Gonzalez-Jacobo, *Brown & Brown Insurance*

Thais Asper Keane, *AT&T*

Dagmar Llaudy, Esq., *Llaudy Law*

Rodrigo Melendez, *KPMG*

Cristina Pérez, *The Jorge M. Pérez Family Foundation*

Abigail Price-Williams, Esq., *Retired Attorney*

Victor Pulido, *Philanthropist*

Magali J. Sanders, Esq., *Kandell, Kandell & Petrie*

Feyza Shipley, *Philanthropist*

Richard Shipley, *Philanthropist*

Steve Stowe, *Miami HEAT Charitable Fund*

Yolanda Valencia, *Galleria Farms*

Courtney Whitney, *Ballard Partners*



# 2023-2024 HIGHLIGHTS

- **Maintaining Innovative Advocacy and Support**

- Our **Permanency Specialist** and **Independent Living Specialist** helped children achieve stable homes and supported youth transitioning to adulthood.
- Voices **funded more than 50% of the Statewide Guardian ad Litem Office/Eleventh Circuit's staff**, ensuring every child had a voice in court.

- **Kinship Family Stabilization**

- Expanded Kinship Care initiative, enabling children to be placed with relatives or trusted caregivers, avoiding foster and group homes.
- **Of 506 children supported, only 11 or two percent entered foster care.**
- Funds were committed so that in 2025, a full-time **System Navigator** will further enhance Kinship family stability.

- **Essential Items**

- Our **Comfort Closet** provided vital items and joyful experiences at no cost to children and their caregivers.
- Adding to our Comfort Closet, **Voices funded furniture, food, clothing, baby items and other essentials** for children when they first entered and throughout their time in foster care.

- **Normalcy Efforts**

- Through our Children's Needs Fund, **we ensured children had access to braces, tutoring, after school programs, and summer camps**—promoting dignity and age-appropriate experiences for children in foster care.

- **Positive Childhood Experiences and Memory Making**

- Voices hosted **transformative experiences** for children, including college tours, shark tagging, therapeutic wilderness programs, trips to Disney World and a mission trip to the Dominican Republic, helping youth dream beyond their circumstances. Last year Voices, in collaboration with our partners, hosted **more than a dozen memory making experiences for 571 unduplicated children.**

- **Innovating Systemic Change**

- In collaboration with The Children's Home Society and eight other organizations, Voices advanced plans for **The Dream Collective**—a centralized hub to better address the complex needs of foster children and families.
- A \$90,000 Innovation Grant from The Children's Trust was committed to this groundbreaking initiative, set to open in 2027, ensuring sustainable, life-changing impact.



# OVERVIEW OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY’S CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

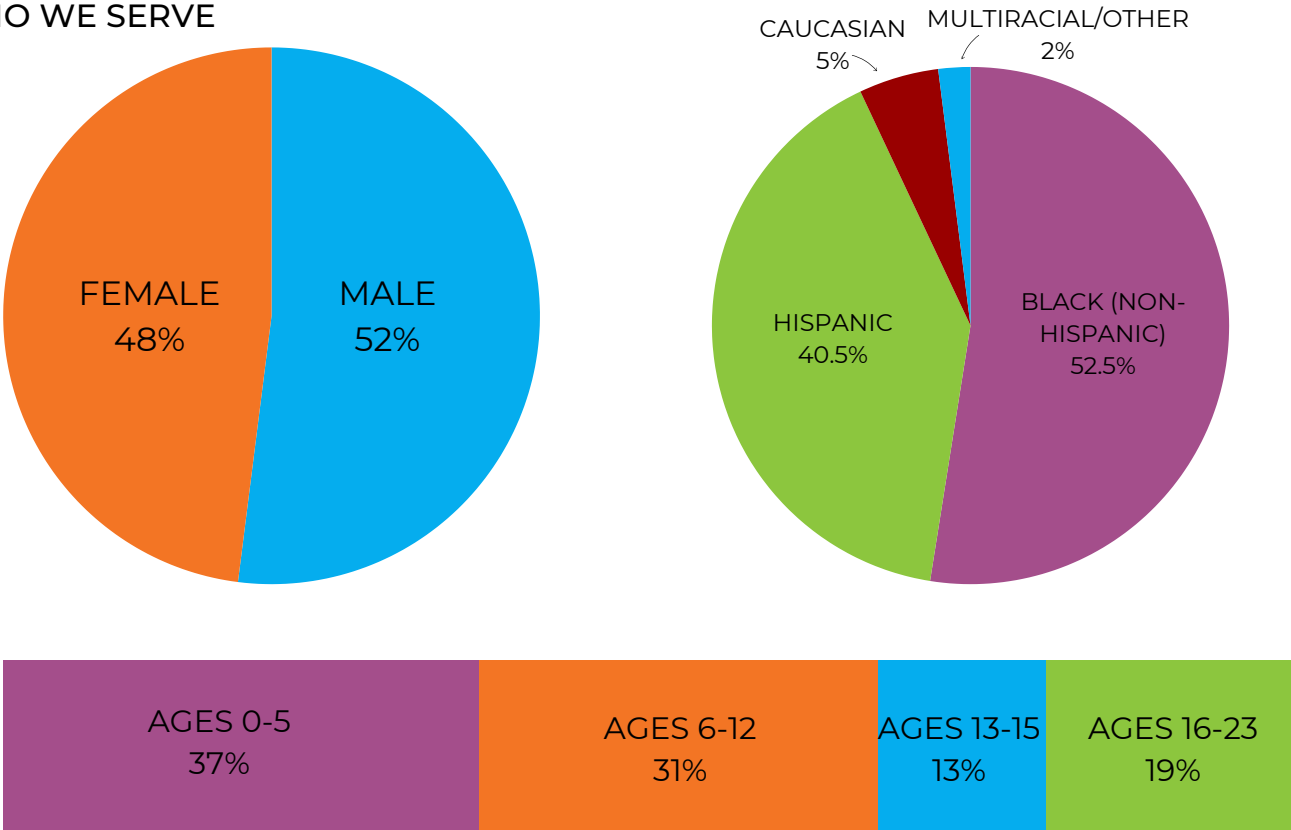
## Why Children Enter Foster Care

Children and youth enter Miami-Dade’s foster care system due to **abuse, neglect, human trafficking, or parental challenges (e.g., substance abuse, mental health issues, domestic violence, incarceration)**. The system is overseen by the Florida Department of Children & Families and Citrus Family Care Network.

## Advocacy & Legal Representation by the Numbers

- **2,220 children (ages 0-23)** received **100% legal advocacy** in Dependency Court.
- **Guardian ad Litem (GAL)** advocates and attorneys safeguarded the best interests of every child.
- **55% of GAL staff** in Miami-Dade were **funded by Voices For Children**.

## WHO WE SERVE



## COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

Many children live in underserved, low-income communities, including: **Overtown, Liberty City, Little Haiti, Hialeah and Homestead**.

They face financial instability, exacerbated by Miami’s high cost of living and lack of affordable housing.

*With Voices For Children’s support, these youth gain the advocacy and resources needed to build brighter futures.*





# CHILDREN'S NEEDS PROGRAM EXPANSION AND ENHANCEMENTS

In 2023-2024, **Voices For Children Foundation** expanded its **Children's Needs Program**, providing critical support to children and youth in Miami-Dade's foster care system. With additional funding from the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners, **Voices delivered impactful assistance** to ensure dignity and essential resources for those served.

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENT: MEETING ESSENTIAL NEEDS

**1,099 children received direct financial support** for essentials like car seats, beds, and school uniforms—exceeding our goal of 1,000.

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENT: THE COMFORT CLOSET

Centrally located at Voices' office, providing free access to:

- **Diapers, formula, and toiletries**
- **Clothing, school supplies, and backpacks**
- **Toys, bicycles, sporting goods, art supplies, and more**
- GAL advocates and caregivers utilized the Closet to create personalized care packages for children and youth, ensuring their needs were met quickly and compassionately.

✓ **OVER 2,000 DIGNITY ITEMS DISTRIBUTED!**

tour our comfort closet



## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENT: BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUPPORT

In August 2023, Voices partnered with Old Navy to host a private shopping event for **400 children in foster care**.

**Each child received:**

- **\$100 gift card for clothing**
- **A backpack filled with school supplies**
- **Additional gift cards for shoes and food**



## IMPACT

Through generous donors, sponsors, and community leaders, Voices helped children feel like "normal" kids—ensuring they had the resources and confidence to thrive in school and beyond.

# CHANGING TRAJECTORIES: TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES FOR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

In 2023-2024, **571 youth in foster care** participated in **life-changing cultural, educational, environmental, and service-oriented experiences**, expanding their horizons and building resilience. These opportunities—made possible by **generous donors and partners**—empowered youth to dream bigger and **envision a future beyond their current circumstances**.

## HIGHLIGHT: BLUE MISSIONS TRIP – DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (JULY 2023)

- 19 youth experiencing foster care built clean water and sanitation systems for rural communities.
- The youth developed leadership skills and a global perspective through hands-on service.
- They also experienced local culture—catamaran sailing, ziplining, and exploring Puerto Plata.



“It made an impact on me knowing that these people appreciate and are grateful for what service we provided.”  
– Jenna, Youth Participant

ALL ABOUT BLUE MISSIONS 2023





## HIGHLIGHT: COLLEGE TOUR – FLORIDA (MARCH 2024)

- 19 high school students toured 7 Florida colleges, including FAMU, UCF, and FSU.
- Youth engaged with college staff, learned about financial aid, and discovered resources for youth in care and first-generation students

“Touring FAMU made me confident that I want to be part of this university.”  
–Youth Participant



“Walking on campus at UCF made me excited for the next chapter of my life.”  
–Youth Participant

## HIGHLIGHT: BUFFALO COVE OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTER – NORTH CAROLINA (JUNE 2024)

- 14 youth (ages 12-14) immersed in nature through hiking, canoeing, and campfire building.
- They built confidence, self-awareness, and a sense of community.
- For most participating youth, it was their first time on an airplane and their first deep connection with nature.



Dear SPONSOR,  
I thank you for doing everything you did to make my summer trip at buffalo cove an unforgettable experience. Because of your generosity, we were able to canoe, hiking, and have amazing campfires with amazing staff, and more and more kids will have amazing memories.



## KINSHIP FAMILY STABILIZATION FUND: KEEPING CHILDREN WITH FAMILIES

In 2023–2024, Voices For Children launched the Kinship Family Stabilization Fund to provide immediate financial support to kinship caregivers—relatives, friends, or neighbors—offering safe, nurturing homes to foster children. **This critical initiative prevented unnecessary foster placements, ensuring stability and continuity for vulnerable children.**

### KINSHIP FAMILY STABILIZATION FUND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

**506**

children living with kinship caregivers participated in our Kinship Family Stabilization Program.

**105**

of these children were successfully reunited with their families, with an average of just 9.5 months in care.

**21**

achieved permanency through guardianship with their caregivers, providing them with long-term stability.

**13**

found forever homes through adoption.

**ONLY 11**

required placement in foster care or group homes, demonstrating the program's effectiveness.

### IMPACT: STRENGTHENING FAMILIES, CREATING STABILITY

By removing financial barriers, Voices For Children helps ensure children can remain in familiar, loving homes with relatives—minimizing the trauma of separation and laying the groundwork for long-term stability and well-being.

Children placed with relatives—known as kinship care—experience better outcomes than those in traditional foster or group homes. Research shows they have fewer placement disruptions, stronger emotional bonds, better behavioral health, and a greater sense of belonging. That's why, whenever possible, we work to keep children with safe, nurturing family members.

Voices For Children steps in early to support kinship caregivers with critical items like rental and utility assistance, furniture, hygiene products, clothing, toys, food, school supplies, and more. These supports make placements more sustainable and help prevent children from unnecessarily entering group or non-relative foster care.

We also help accelerate reunification by filling the gaps once parents have completed their court-mandated services—ensuring that children can return home safely, swiftly, and with the stability they need to thrive.



## KINSHIP FAMILY STABILIZATION FUND: KEEPING CHILDREN WITH FAMILIES

In 2023–2024, Voices For Children launched the Kinship Family Stabilization Fund to provide immediate financial support to kinship caregivers—relatives, friends, or neighbors—offering safe, nurturing homes to foster children. **This critical initiative prevented unnecessary foster placements, ensuring stability and continuity for vulnerable children.**

### MEET STAN & HIS FAMILY

When Stan's biological daughter's siblings entered the foster care system, he didn't hesitate to welcome them into his home. Overnight, he became a father of four—a life-changing decision that came with immense challenges. But Stan wasn't alone.

Over the years, Voices For Children Foundation has been there for Stan, providing the support he needed to keep his family strong. From rental and utility assistance to school supplies, uniforms, and food, Voices has helped ease the burden. They even made it possible for the family to create lasting memories with a special trip to Disney World.



### MEET JULIE & HER FAMILY

Julie's kids entered the system due to her struggles with substance abuse. Her oldest, Max, was placed into a group home, while her three younger siblings were split up into two foster homes. Julie was determined to get her family back together. She completed every mandated program and made real changes, but one major barrier remained: she didn't have stable housing or the resources to bring all four children home.

Once reunification was approved, Julie planned to relocate to Central Florida for a fresh start near extended family. The move cost nearly \$6,000—an expense she couldn't cover alone. Voices For Children paid for the move and provided beds and bedding, making sure the family could begin again in a safe, stable home. We also supported Max, now a teenager, by keeping her active in our youth programs, including two Blue Missions service trips. Through these experiences, Max has built confidence, leadership, and a sense of purpose along the way.

Today, Max (pictured at right) and her siblings are home, together, surrounded by love—and we're proud to have been part of making that possible.



# KINSHIP FAMILY STABILIZATION: RETURN ON INVESTMENT

KEEPING CHILDREN WITH FAMILY. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES. REDUCING COSTS.

At Voices For Children, our mission extends beyond supporting children in foster care – we proactively help children stay with loving relatives, avoiding the trauma of displacement and saving the State of Florida substantial dollars in the process.

## THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF RELATIVE VS. NON-RELATIVE CARE

In Florida, placing a child with a licensed foster family costs the state substantially more than placing that child with a relative caregiver.

Placement Type	Estimated Monthly Cost to the State (per child)
Foster Care	\$1,200-\$1,600
Relative Caregiver	\$300-\$350

*Information sourced from Florida's Department of Children and Families (DCF), adoption.com, and the Florida Senate*

## OUR ROLE IN THE COST SAVINGS

Many relative caregivers are willing but unable to take in children due to financial limitations. That's where we step in.

When our organization provides targeted support, we unlock long-term savings for the state. Here's how:

**Furniture:** Items like beds, cribs, and dressers, that can help relative homes meet licensing/safety standards.

**Groceries & Essentials:** Items like food, diapers, and hygiene products that support stability during transition.

**School Supplies & Uniforms:** Items like backpacks, shoes, and clothing that reduce burden on families and improve child integration.

**Rental & Utility Support:** Strategic assistance with rent, utilities, or relocation costs to help stabilize housing, prevent caregiver or child displacement, and support safe transitions when a move is necessary.

## Sample ROI Calculation

To demonstrate impact, let's look at the savings generated by supporting 50 children over the course of a year.

- Average Monthly State Savings per Child: \$1,000
- Annual Savings (50 children × \$1,000 × 12 months): \$600,000
- Our Support Costs (avg. \$200 per child): \$10,000
- **Total Net Savings to the State: \$560,000**

## More Than Just Cost Savings

While the financial impact is compelling, the human impact is immeasurable:

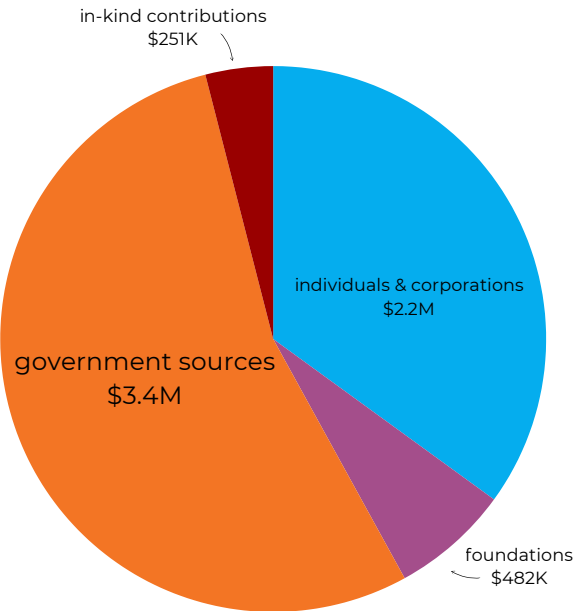
- Children remain connected to community.
- Caregivers receive the dignity of support without the red tape.
- Outcomes for education, mental health, and stability improve significantly.



# ORGANIZATIONAL & FINANCIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Voices expanded its leadership, financial impact, and systemic influence in Miami-Dade’s foster care system—**delivering record-breaking results for vulnerable children and families.**

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENT: RECORD-BREAKING FUNDRAISING – \$6.35M RAISED



Unrestricted funding covered general operations, sustaining vital programs like permanency & independent living specialists, ensuring faster family reunifications and smoother transitions for youth aging out of foster care.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

### KINSHIP SUPPORT EXPANSION

Preparing to hire a Kinship Navigator to assist caregivers with rent, utilities, furnishings, clothing, and essentials—stabilizing home and school placements while awaiting entitlements.

### GROUNDBREAKING COLLABORATION

Signed the first-ever Memorandum of Agreement with Citrus Family Care Network, enhancing kinship placements and improving resource-sharing for children in foster care.

### INNOVATIVE SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Launched collaborative action on The Dream Collective, Miami-Dade’s first centralized hub for youth in care (ages 0-24) and families—ensuring efficient referrals, timely services, and better support through a multi-disciplinary approach.

### EXEMPLARY FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Earned a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator—demonstrating financial efficiency, transparency, and excellence.

## IMPACT: STRENGTHENING THE FUTURE OF FOSTER CARE

These achievements reflect Voices’ commitment to systemic change, stability, and brighter futures for children experiencing foster care and families.



**Your support makes this possible—thank you for being part of the journey!**

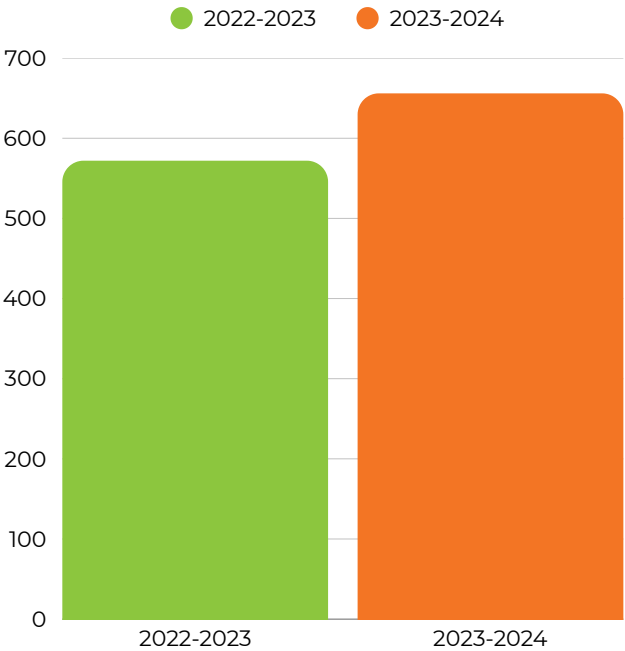
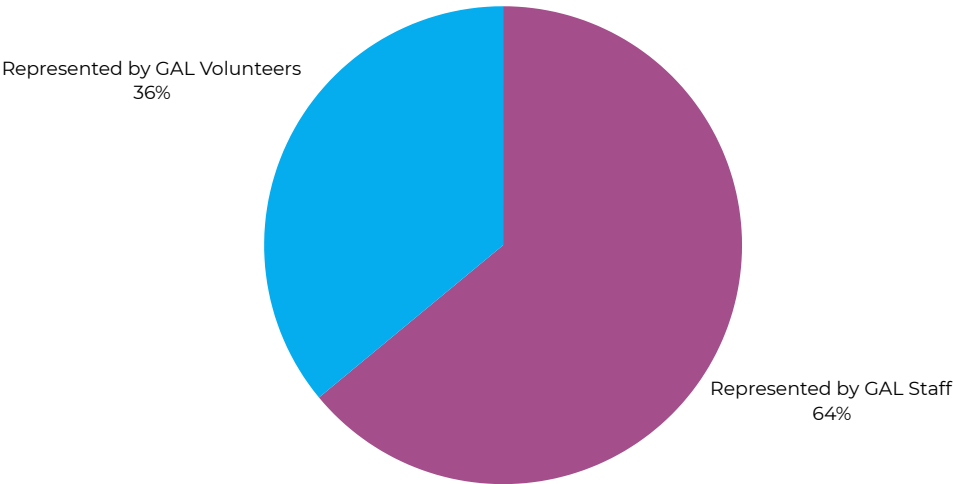
# BEST INTEREST ADVOCACY & INNOVATIVE SPECIALIST OUTCOMES

Voices For Children funded more than 60 Guardian ad Litem (GAL) staff, covering more than 50% of the team needed to advocate for 100% of Miami-Dade’s foster children. These efforts led to record-breaking outcomes in legal advocacy, permanency, education, and independent living.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

### CHILDREN REPRESENTED:

- **2,220 children received 100% legal advocacy (vs. 2,000 projected).**



### PERMANENCY ACHIEVED:

- 99% of 659 closed cases resulted in permanency (vs. 95% projected).
- **13% increase in children achieving permanency (656 in FY23-24 vs. 572 in FY22-23).**

### EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS:

93% of 1,422 school-age children remained in school, college, or vocational programs (vs. 85% projected)



BEST INTEREST ADVOCACY & INNOVATIVE SPECIALIST OUTCOMES

CHILD PERMANENCY EFFORTS

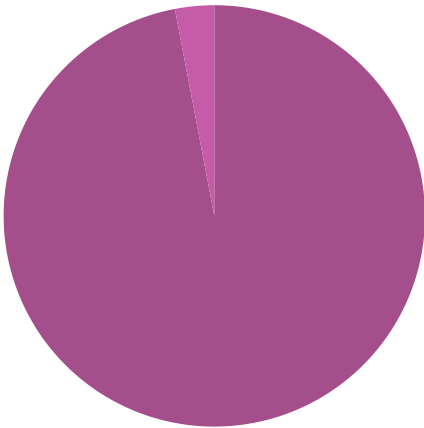
Voices' advocacy and innovative staffing efforts not only represented more children than projected but also improved key outcomes like permanency and educational continuity. These achievements enhanced stability, reduced trauma, and provided foster care children with greater opportunities for lifelong success.

2023-2024 OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY THE PERMANENCY SPECIALIST:

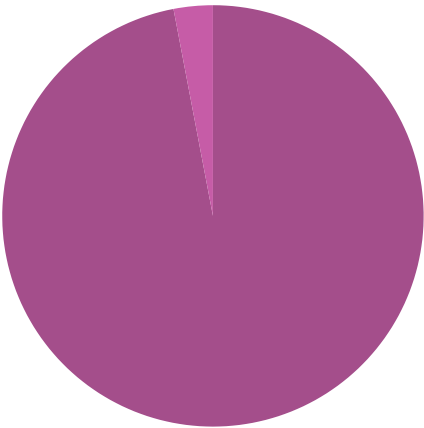
- **443 young children (ages 0-5) & siblings received targeted support for permanency.**
- 270 children achieved expedited permanency through intensive legal advocacy.
- 85% of separated siblings had placement reviews every 60 days to strengthen family bonds.

Impact: Faster permanency reduced trauma, minimized school disruptions, and helped children break the cycle of abuse.

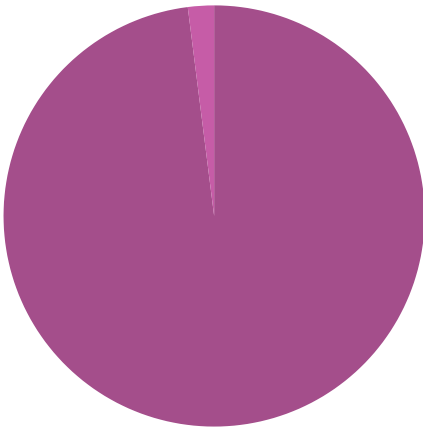
2023-2024 OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY THE INDEPENDENT LIVING SPECIALIST:



97% of 184 youth were in school, vocational programs, or employed full-time (vs. 85% projected).



97% avoided involvement with the juvenile/criminal justice system (vs. 90% projected).



98% extended foster care beyond age 18, ensuring stability & access to crucial benefits.

Impact: Early transition planning set youth up for long-term success, reducing risks of unemployment, incarceration, and homelessness.





## ANTICIPATED IMPACT & VISION FOR 2024-2025

### TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH DONOR SUPPORT

In 2023-2024, **Voices For Children Foundation achieved remarkable outcomes** by investing in critical advocacy, essential resources, and life-changing experiences for Miami-Dade's foster youth. These successes were **made possible by our generous donors**, whose contributions directly fueled stability, opportunity, and hope for children in foster care.

"We all need someone who believes in us, and that's exactly what Voices For Children provides. Their work creates real, lasting impact, which is why I'm so passionate about supporting them."

-Sophie, Voices For Children Donor



### AN EVEN GREATER VISION FOR FY 2024-2025

With increased donor support, Voices For Children aims to further enhance its impact by:

- **Expanding Reach** - Serving more children in Miami-Dade's growing foster care population to ensure no child is left without critical advocacy, essential needs and positive childhood experiences.
- **Accelerating Permanency and keeping kids out of foster homes and group homes** - Building on the success of our Kindship Care Stabilization and Permanency Specialist to expedite stable placements for more children so we can expedite permanency, keep siblings together and lessen trauma.
- **Empowering Independent Living** - Increasing early preparation for foster youth aged 16+ to transition successfully to adulthood, reducing risks of homelessness, unemployment and other challenges.
- **Transforming Trajectories** - Providing opportunities to ensure children in foster care can dream beyond their circumstances so they do not end up becoming a statistic and instead break the intergenerational cycle of abuse.
- **Innovative System Change** - Continuing to lead and implement centralized resources for children in foster care through The Collective: a hub for services and resources to better serve children in foster care, their caregivers and families.

#### The Donor Difference

Your support changes lives. Every donation helps ensure foster youth receive:

- ✓ Advocacy
- ✓ Essential needs & stability
- ✓ Opportunities and experiences for growth & success

**Together, we can make 2024-2025 a year of transformative impact—changing lives and strengthening our community, one child at a time.**





[beavoice.org](http://beavoice.org)

601 NW 1st Court, 10th Floor  
Miami, FL 33136  
Phone: (305) 324-5678

Voices For Children Foundation. All rights reserved.

Voices For Children Foundation, Inc. raises funds to ensure that every abused, abandoned, and neglected child in Miami-Dade County has critical support for advocacy, essential needs and positive experiences.

Tax ID 59-2746076