



# CHAMPION ADVOCATE FOSTER



m·s·p·c·c  
A DIVISION OF ELIOT

2018 | ANNUAL REPORT

MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN



# CHAMPION ADVOCATE FOSTER

We are grateful for the kindness and generosity of our donors who support our efforts, enabling our home visitors, clinicians, therapeutic mentors, and other staff to work tirelessly and unceasingly towards MSPCC's enduring goal to keep children safe.

to encourage  
and promote  
the development  
of children

MSPCC champions child abuse prevention by strengthening families.

MSPCC advocates for the rights and well-being of all families across the Commonwealth.

MSPCC fosters resilience in the children we serve when they need strength the most.

#### MISSION STATEMENT

MSPCC is a private, non-profit society dedicated to leadership in protecting and promoting the rights and well-being of children and families.

*As MSPCC celebrates our 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we take a look at our history of working with children and families across the Commonwealth to prevent child abuse before it begins, intervene to keep children safe and thriving, and advocate for the rights of all children and families.*



#### TIMELINE

##### ● 1874

The first legal case for children's rights is held when Etta Wheeler seeks help from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to stop the brutal treatment of a young girl named Mary Ellen.

##### ● 1878

MSPCC is formed "...to help the enforcement of existing laws on the subject, procure needed legislation and for kindred work."

# Dear Friends,

*Tonight, in a home maybe down the street from yours, a child is rocked to sleep in the arms of a loving mother. Down the hall, a seven-year-old insists it is too early for bed and dad snuggles in to read one more book. It sounds so normal, but for these little ones and more than 8,700 other children, normal was turned upside down when it was no longer safe for them to live with their biological parents. On that first night, frightened, anxious, and very sad, this brother and sister were tucked into bed by the mother and father who volunteered to become foster parents.*

The Massachusetts foster care system is tasked with providing care and protection to children and youth when it is determined that they need to be removed from their biological family. The ultimate goal is a safe, stable family—either back with their biological family or with an adoptive family. Foster and kinship families provide a loving, nurturing home temporarily. Out-of-home placement of children by the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) reached historic highs in the wake of the opioid crisis.

Since 1997, the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC) has partnered with DCF to provide training, family supports, and resources to foster families across the Commonwealth. MSPCC offers training, respite services, an evening and weekend helpline, and individualized assistance to foster parents to help them access resources, provide support, and resolve issues. In addition, MSPCC supports the outreach, communications, and public policy initiatives of the Massachusetts Alliance For Families (MAFF), the state's foster family association. Through these exclusive relationships, MSPCC engages with foster families on a daily basis, positioning us to assess ongoing and emerging trends and issues and to develop and implement solutions.

This past year, MSPCC received a number of grant awards to pilot or expand services for foster children and families, projects that will have a direct impact on placement stability for thousands of foster children each year. Our goal is to support DCF's efforts to enhance the lives of the children in their care.

Our work on behalf of foster families is only possible with the support of the individuals, corporations, and foundations who give from the heart. Your generosity not only makes that vital work possible, but allows us the ability to test new programs and methodologies, analyze trends, advocate for necessary change, and educate about the impact of our work.

For 140 years, MSPCC has tackled whatever crisis children face, from abuse and neglect to substance abuse and mental illness. You are a partner in that work. Thank you for your generosity, kindness, and commitment to MSPCC.



Mary A. McGeown  
Executive Director



Charles V. Senatore  
Chair  
Board of Advisors



The Kid's Net program offers a range of services to connect foster and kinship families to the information, resources, respite, and support networks they need to address the unique challenges that come with caring for children in foster care. MSPCC's Advocacy team recently conducted a survey to solicit information on the experience of foster parents. *More than 1,000 foster parents took the survey and reported finding deep satisfaction in providing a safe and loving home for a child, but acknowledge a unique set of challenges they are not prepared to handle without support.*



#### ● 1884

Legislation is passed banning the exhibition of deformed children for money and a new law prohibiting the use of children in street entertainment is established.

#### ● 1903

MSPCC changes its operating philosophy from enforcement to a prevention approach, which was revolutionary at the time.

#### ● 1930

The Third White House Conference on Children determines that prevention of factors that cause abuse and neglect must be a national priority.

# Foster Parent Survey Advocacy

Children in foster care have experienced abuse or neglect and often lived in difficult family situations with parents suffering from addiction and mental health issues. These traumatic experiences lead to a greater likelihood of poor child well-being, including behavioral and emotional problems. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) classifies children in foster care as a special health care needs population.

According to AAP, 46-60% of foster children younger than 6 years have a developmental disability and up to 80% enter foster care with a significant mental health need. More than 40% of MSPCC's survey respondents indicated that a child placed in their home had a diagnosable mental health condition, a substance abuse condition, or both. While 28% access services within a month, more than

21% waited six or more months for a child to be seen for the first time by a mental health care provider. Half of all respondents have declined a placement, with one third citing behavioral health issues as the reason.

MSPCC is using the results of this survey to inform our advocacy efforts on behalf of foster families.

As part of that effort, **MSPCC was awarded a \$100,000 grant from The Boston Foundation to develop interventions** to improve DCF involved children's access to mental health services as well as \$50,000 from the Clipper Ship Foundation to enhance Kid's Net's supports for foster parents on substance use related challenges.

## CHAMPION ADVOCATE FOSTER

### ● 1959

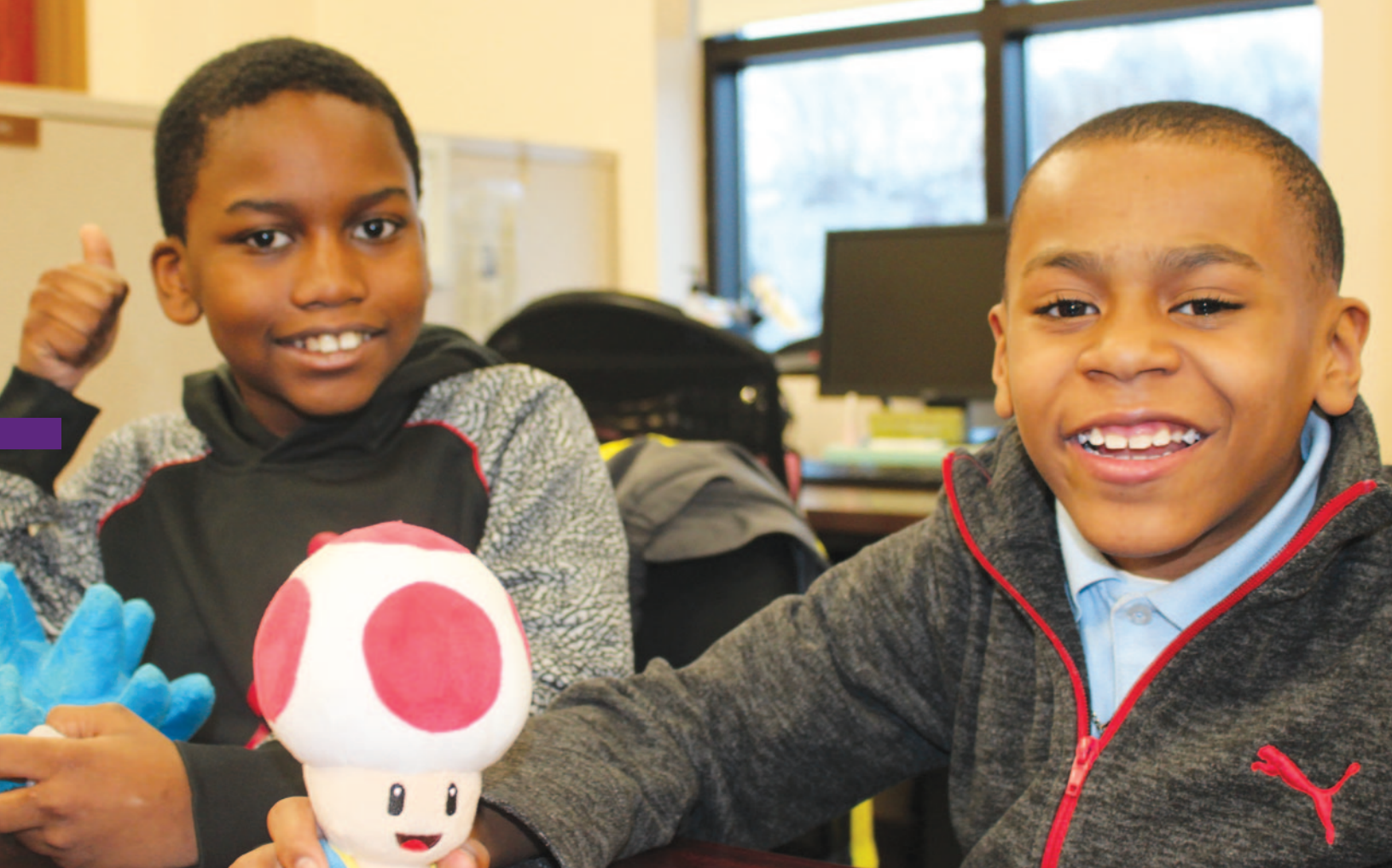
MSPCC leads the national effort to draft a new statement of "Standards for Child Protective Service."

### ● 1973

MSPCC's General Secretary chairs the Governor's Committee on Child Abuse that leads to Section 51A, requiring professionals such as teachers and social workers to report suspected child abuse.

### ● 1980

MSPCC is instrumental in advocating for the creation of the state's Department of Social Services, now the Department of Children and Families, and the Child Welfare Act.



*Carrie began her foster care story as a child in care of the Department of Children and Families. She was removed from her home at the age of ten, and stayed in two different foster homes over the next three years. It was in her second foster home that Carrie found inspiration to become a foster parent herself later in life due to the extraordinary kindness her family provided.*

#### ● 1984

MSPCC wins endorsement from the Child Welfare League of America's Council of Accreditation and obtains its first clinical license.

#### ● 1997

MSPCC works with legislators to file a bill establishing a newborn home visiting program called Healthy Families, a program of the Children's Trust.

#### ● 1997

MSPCC launches the first statewide foster care contract, Kid's Net, which trains and supports foster, kinship, and adoptive families in caring for children who have suffered major trauma and loss and are currently in DCF custody.



# Carrie's Story Prevention

As an adult, Carrie desperately wanted to provide support for children in need. In 2010, her nephew needed a home and Carrie's natural instinct kicked in as she stepped up to foster him. The experience taught her that she was able to be a foster mother, despite challenges such as being single. In 2016, Carrie opened her home to her first unrestricted foster child (non-family member).

While understandably nervous to welcome someone new into her home, Carrie felt more equipped than most.

Through kinship fostering of her nephew, she had developed strong relationships with social workers and had no preconceived fears about foster children because, as she reminds people, "I am one of those children."

Since welcoming that first child, Carrie has enjoyed a successful fostering career. Carrie is proud to say, "I have yet to come across a child who doesn't want to be here (at my house)." She always takes the extra steps to make a child feel as though they are in a fun, kid-friendly space.

Seemingly simple things like learning their favorite food and treating them to sweets makes her home, their home. Constant changes are a part of every foster child's story, and Carrie does whatever she can to make her chapter a bright one.

Because Carrie works tirelessly to ensure that all the children in her house are given ample attention and care, she began to feel a little overwhelmed when she found herself with a third child in her home and no time to herself.

As a single foster parent, Carrie works twice as hard to care for her children and needed a hand. It was then that she learned of the **Kid's Net** respite programs. MSPCC's Kid's Net program works one-on-one with foster families throughout the Commonwealth, to help them understand and manage the needs of children in their care. Carrie was connected with a trained foster family that she trusted to watch her kids for short periods. It only took a few hours of time away from her foster children for Carrie to feel reenergized and ready to continue to brighten this chapter of their lives.

*\* Photo does not represent the children in Carrie's story.*

## CHAMPION ADVOCATE FOSTER

### ● 2005

MSPCC hosts the 15<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect. Approximately 2,300 individuals attend.

### ● 2007

MSPCC and Boston Children's Hospital join together with the Parent/Professional Advocacy League, Health Law Advocates, and Health Care For All to form the Children's Mental Health Campaign.

### ● 2012

MSPCC joins forces with legislative leaders to pass CHINS (Children in Need of Services) reform, ensuring community-based services for at-risk children and establishing Family Resource Centers.



*Xavier was only four years old when it was decided that he could no longer live with his biological parents. Within the span of his young life, he and his siblings had faced unimaginable traumas that left Xavier with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He was placed with a foster family who tried everything they could to help him find peace. They knew the best way to help children grow is to provide a safe and stable environment for them, but a child with Xavier's struggles had trouble feeling safe anywhere. They quickly found that they couldn't give him what he needed on their own.*

#### ● 2014

MSPCC spearheads legislation to establish a Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse.

#### ● 2016

MSPCC combines with Eliot Community Human Services to further expand each organization's impact as leaders in behavioral health services.

#### ● 2018

MSPCC conducts a statewide survey of foster parents, giving voice to their experiences, concerns, and needs.



# Xavier's Story Intervention

When Xavier was first referred to MSPCC, he was fearful of being left alone in a room and of loud noises. He often began fights with other children over small issues, struggling to express his feelings and breaking things when he was upset. MSPCC's therapeutic plan began with physical activity.

When Xavier's behavior escalated and he was unable to speak, his clinician encouraged him to exercise: do some pushups; try a headstand; play basketball. Sensory and repetitive activities quieted the other more destructive impulses and allowed Xavier to focus. His clinician began to teach him what his foster parents had tried, working with him to build up his tolerance to challenging situations and to manage stress.

Xavier's foster mother sat with him through many of his sessions. She was determined to learn more about trauma and ways she could help Xavier, from recognizing warning signs when he was struggling to understanding the challenges he was facing.

It is common for therapists to encourage children in foster care to develop "life books." Many times, when children undergo adverse experiences or traumatic changes,

critical memories become muddled and can cause uncertainty in later years.

**A life book is a collection of pictures and stories about what is happening in their life as it happens.** MSPCC helped Xavier create his own life book, containing pictures of both of his families: the biological parents he has learned to talk about, and the foster parents who helped him get where he is today.

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*\* Name and photo have been changed to protect Xavier's confidentiality.*

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# Belle's Story The NAN Project

When MSPCC joined forces with Eliot Community Human Services in 2016, we shared a deep commitment to making a difference in the lives of children and families. Together, through direct services and strong advocacy, we work to keep kids safe, healthy, and thriving. MSPCC is proud to support and advocate for The NAN Project whose mission is to open up the conversation about depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders, focusing on emotional well-being and giving students the tools to ask for help for themselves or a friend. The goal of The NAN Project is suicide prevention and raising awareness as a key step in destigmatizing mental health.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people. Research indicates that more than 80% of high school students suffer from or know a friend who struggles with depression or anxiety. Today's young people face intense stress and have limited channels through which to get help. Although it is a medical condition that can be treated, any form of mental illness tends to be surrounded by stigma. No one speaks about the invisible frailties of the brain.

•The NAN Project, created in memory of a young woman who took her life at age 24, is dedicated to raising the conversation about depression and suicide above a whisper.

•The NAN Project gives communities and schools the forum, tools, and resources needed to accept and address depression and suicidality.

•The NAN Project is committed to creating the information and supports that will allow young people to ask for help and to reach out to one another for support.

•The NAN Project delivers a message of hope to those who are struggling and a path to healing for those who are grieving.

When Belle was only sixteen years old, she was hospitalized after attempting to take her own life. Belle battled with mental illness for years and struggled to ask for help, feeling alone by the stigma surrounding her issues. During her recovery, the first season of 13 Reasons Why, a Netflix television show, was released. "I strongly believe that 13 Reasons Why does not portray an accurate depiction of suicide, its causes, and certainly not how to prevent it.

A young girl's suicide was glorified, blamed on others, and it did not show how mental illness affects 90% of those who die by suicide," said Belle. "I was so angry because the show was targeted at young people without providing information on the supports available and making sure that those watching know there is hope." While still healing, Belle decided to take action. She joined The NAN Project as a Peer Mentor and now goes with them into high schools to share her experiences with peers, initiate a discussion on mental health in classrooms, and inform students and faculty of supports that are available.



*The NAN Project produced 13 Reasons Why We Need to Talk About Suicide, a series of videos to inform viewers about the true risk factors that increase the likelihood someone may consider suicide, provide information on the supports available, and empower others with tools to reach out to a loved one in crisis. [www.thenanproject.org](http://www.thenanproject.org)*



Additional school districts  
in planning phase

10

5,000

Presentations to students, teachers  
and community stakeholders

Massachusetts  
school districts

15

120

Trained Peer  
Mentors

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# MSPCC Financials

As of 6/30/18

## ASSETS

Total Current Assets	\$4,840,973
Net Property and Equipment	681,646
Investments	15,389,129
Irrevocable Trusts	3,432,438
Other Assets	54,253
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>24,398,439*</b>

## LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

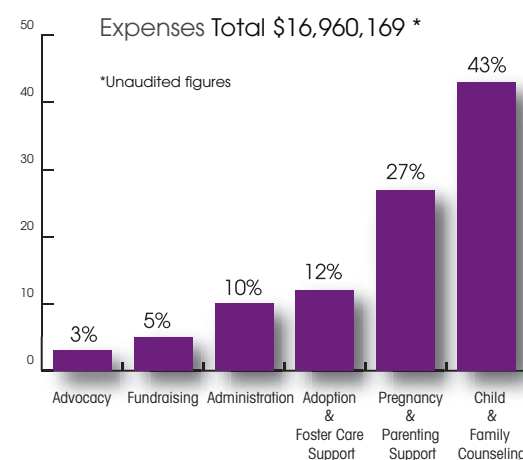
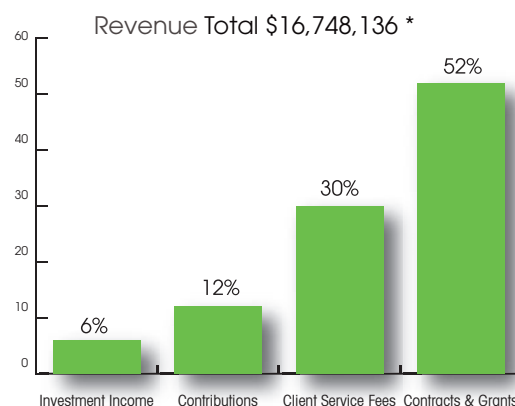
Total Current Liabilities	\$892,070
Long Term Debt and Obligations	3,954,228
Net Assets	19,552,141
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$24,398,439</b>

## OPERATIONS

Operating Revenue	\$16,748,136
Operating Expenses	\$16,960,169
Operating Deficit	\$ -212,033

\* Unaudited figures

For complete audited financial statements, please contact  
Melanie Lima, Director of Development, at 617.587.1587 or  
mlima@mspcc.org.



# MSPCC Board of Advisors

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Eliot Community Human Services

MARY A. MCGEOWN  
Executive Director  
MSPCC

\*Emeritus



*This past year, MSPCC was the recipient of a generous bequest from a donor who was a past member of MSPCC's Board of Directors. The donor, who wished to remain anonymous, had been a supporter of MSPCC since 2000. Her interest was in MSPCC's work with foster children throughout Massachusetts. As a member of the Mary Ellen Society, her bequest will help children well into the future.*

## Legacy Gifts through The Mary Ellen Society

Each year, MSPCC is the recipient of generous bequests from supporters who wish to carry on their legacy of keeping children safe through The Mary Ellen Society.

Named for a little girl whose landmark child abuse court case led to the establishment of MSPCC in 1878, The Mary Ellen Society honors donors whose generosity via bequests or life income gifts assures MSPCC's future excellence. The Mary Ellen Society members receive invitations to all MSPCC events and recognition in

MSPCC's annual report and on our website. There are no dues, fees or minimums associated with membership in The Mary Ellen Society.

You can have an impact on Massachusetts' most vulnerable children for years to come by joining The Mary Ellen Society with a planned gift to MSPCC.

If you have included MSPCC in your estate plans, or would like to learn more, please contact

**MELANIE LIMA,**  
Director of Development  
at 617.587.1587 or  
[mlima@mspcc.org](mailto:mlima@mspcc.org).

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# Thank you

**MSPCC's efforts on behalf of children and families across Massachusetts would not be possible without the generosity of individuals, corporations, and foundations.**

**We are grateful for all who supported MSPCC this year, and we honor their commitment to ensuring a bright future for children and families of Massachusetts.**



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Anonymous  
The Boston Foundation  
United Way of Massachusetts Bay & Merrimack Valley

## **President's Circle (\$50,000+)**

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 Reinier and Nancy Beeuwkes  
 Molly Bergner  
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413.532.9446

#### LAWRENCE

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#### LOWELL

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