Since 1894, ChildServ has built better lives for more than 137,000 children. We are proud to help children and families reach their potential in Cook, DuPage, Kane and Lake counties through our home-based programs as well as services provided at the following locations:

ChildServ — Chicago North, Administrative Office
8765 W. Higgins, Suite 450
Chicago, IL 60631
(773) 693-0300

ChildServ — Chicago South
3753 S. Cottage Grove Ave., 2nd Fl.
Chicago, IL 60653
(773) 239-8094

ChildServ — Chicago West
743 N. Pulaski Rd.
Chicago, IL 60624
(773) 867-7319

ChildServ — Elgin
651 Lillie St.
Elgin, IL 60120
(773) 693-0300

ChildServ — Lake County
2424 Washington St., Suite 210
Waukegan, IL 60087
(773) 867-7360

ChildServ — DuPage County, Administrative Office
1260 Iroquois Drive, Suite 102
Naperville, IL 60523
(630) 778-7250

Note: ChildServ operates group homes in Downers Grove, Lisle and Naperville. For our clients’ privacy and protection, those addresses are not listed.
Letter from our Leadership

Dear Friends,

These are exciting times at ChildServ! The momentum gained this past year was made possible by the incredible generosity and kindness of you, our supporters. So, on behalf of the 2,481 children and families in our care throughout Cook, DuPage, Kane and Lake counties, thank you!

In Fiscal Year 2017, we accomplished a great deal through strategic planning, hard work, and the extraordinary dedication of our staff and unbelievable resilience of our clients:

- The agency received high marks in achieving re-accreditation from the Council on Accreditation, ensuring the best outcomes and safest environments for our clients.
- For a third year in a row, every student in our group homes who was eligible to graduate received a high school diploma.
- We raised more than $1.8 million from private sources, the highest total in our history.

For this coming year, ChildServ has set even loftier goals, and we plan to exceed them. We are well-positioned to meet our clients’ needs, continuing our investment in the promise of our children – our future leaders – and focus on home-based, trauma-informed services, such as early childhood learning, foster care, group homes and Emerge, that help our clients to build better lives and reach their potential.

We will continue to improve and protect the health, safety and well-being of each child in our programs, caring for them as if they were our own children or family members, and providing services that build a strong foundation for the best life possible.

Finally, ChildServ is grateful to our Board of Trustees, Auxiliary Board, community, corporate and faith partners, foster parents, volunteers and team for their tremendous support and commitment to our mission. We look forward to another exciting year of helping our children and families to achieve their goals and realize their dreams.

Best regards,

Dan Kotowski
President and CEO

John Gotschall
Chairman, Board of Trustees

Checklist for Building Better Lives!

☐ MAKE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION
Contribute online - Make a secure online donation using your credit card at www.childserv.org or mail a gift to ChildServ, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Suite 450, Chicago, IL 60631.

☐ GET YOUR EMPLOYER INVOLVED
Encourage your business or employer to give to ChildServ.

☐ CREATE A FUTURE LEADERS SCHOLARSHIP
Create a scholarship for a year of early childhood learning services for a child in our programs in the name of your family or business. One year of programming costs $2,500 and can help a child living in poverty start school ready to learn.

☐ INCLUDE CHILDSERV IN YOUR ESTATE PLANS
Designate ChildServ as a beneficiary in your will or life insurance policy.

☐ PURCHASE OUR A BETTER LIFE COFFEE COLLECTION
Love coffee? With each bag sold, 10% of the proceeds support our programs, helping children and families to reach their potential.

☐ SPONSOR AN EVENT OR AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITY
Support our clients—either through individual or corporate sponsorship—by hosting events and activities throughout the year.

☐ MAKE AN IN-KIND GIFT
Donate new furniture, mattresses, diapers, baby and children’s clothing, coats, pajamas, bath products and shower curtains.

☐ TAKE A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN BUILDING BETTER LIVES
Join our Auxiliary Board, Board of Trustees or President’s Council.

☐ MENTOR A YOUTH
Provide support to a teen in our group homes or foster care program and promote academic achievement and service in the next generation.

☐ BECOME A FOSTER PARENT
Open your heart and home to a child who has experienced trauma and abuse.

☐ CREATE A TEAM-BUILDING EXPERIENCE THAT HELPS KIDS AT RISK
Encourage your company to volunteer to beautify a home or lend their business acumen to help our programs.

For more information about how you can impact the lives of children, contact Zulma Colon, Individual Engagement Manager, at (773) 867-7361 or zcolon@childserv.org.
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REACHING DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES: 614 children were ready to succeed in kindergarten due to our early childhood learning programs.

LOVING HOMES: 34 children found permanent supportive homes through our Foster Care and Adoption programs.

SAFE LIVING ENVIRONMENTS: 29 youth ages 12-18 in our DuPage County group homes received counseling to heal from trauma, encouragement to finish high school and life skills training so that they can become empowered adults.

ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE: 52 young adults moved from homelessness to having safe apartments of their own. More than 85% of them found employment or were in school.

FUTURE LEADERS IN 2017
97% of the parents in our program established goals to help their child succeed in school.

2,481 children and families’ lives made better.

99% of our clients made progress on their personal and professional goals.

90% life skills sessions attended by group home residents to learn financial literacy, time management, cooking and budgeting.

Group Homes

ChildServ, earlier this year, announced a new partnership with Hope Houses Workshop, Inc, a family-owned, local company that creates classic, heirloom quality dollhouses.

Hope Houses’ handcrafted collection of dollhouses include: Merry House (pictured), Climb Treehouse, Joy House and Wish House. Each arrives, fully assembled, play-ready and professionally decorated, and make great holiday gifts.

Hope Houses is a charity partner of ChildServ. When a Hope House is purchased, the purchase delivers another Hope House to a child served by a Give Partner, including ChildServ.

Order your Hope House today at www.hopehousesworkshop.com and give the gift of play to someone you love and child in our care.
We are grateful to our supporters, who make our 123-year mission possible.

Impact & Outcomes

**FOSTER CARE**

100% of children who returned home or were adopted/placed with a guardian now live in a safe and stable, permanent home.

97% of our clients felt safe in their homes.

96% of our clients were satisfied with our services.

**EMERGE**

86% of the young adults in our program were either employed or in school.

**Faith Communities**

- Aldersgate UMC, Rockford, UMW
- Antioch UMC, UMW
- Baker Memorial UMC
- Calvary UMC, Villa Park, UMW
- Calvary UMC, Villa Park
- Central UMC, Skokie
- Central UMC, Skokie, UMW
- Chicago Church of Christ
- Christ UMC, Deerfield Community UMC, Naperville
- Community UMC, Naperville
- Community UMC, Earville UMC, UMW
- Euclid Ave UMC, Oak Park, UMW
- First Presbyterian Church, Deerfield, Presbyterian Women
- First UMC Arlington Heights
- First UMC, Arlington Heights, UMW
- First UMC, Barrington
- First UMC, Chicago Temple, UMW
- First UMC, Downers Grove
- First UMC, Dundee
- First UMC, Evanston
- First UMC, Franklin Park, UMW
- First UMC, La Grange
- First UMC, La Grange, UMW
- First UMC, Oak Park, UMW
- First UMC, Palatine, UMC
- First UMC, Park Ridge
- First UMC, Park Ridge, UMW
- First UMC, Princeton
- First UMC, West Chicago, UMW
- Glenview UMC, UMW
- Grace UMC, Lake Bluff
- Grace UMC, Women’s Ministries
- Grace United Protestant Church, Park Forest
- Hanover UMC
- Hartzell Memorial UMC, UMW
- Hinsdale UMC
- Hinsdale UMC, UMW
- Kingswood UMC, UMW
- Libertyville UMC, UMW
- Memorial UMC, Zion, UMW
- Morgan Park UMC, Chicago
- Morgan Park, UMC, UMW
- Mount Hope UMC, Johnsburg
- Northbrook UMC
- Northern IL Conference, UMC
- Our Redeemer’s UMC, Schaumburg
- Our Redeemer’s UMC, Schaumburg, UMW
- Prince of Peace UMC, Elk Grove Village
- Ravenswood Fellowship UMC, Chicago
- River Forest UMC, UMW
- Rochelle UMC
- Southlawn UMC, UMW
- St. Andrew UMC, Homewood
- St. Margaret of Scotland Parent Club
- The Chicago Temple Fund of First UMC, Chicago
- Trinity UMC, Lindenhurst, UMW
- Trinity UMC, Wilmette
- United Church of Hyde Park, UMW
- United Church of Sandwich
- United Church of Sandwich, UMW
- United Methodist Foundation of the Northern IL Conference
- United Voices for Children
- Wesley UMC, Elgin
- Wesley UMC, Elgin, UMW
- Wespath Benefits and Investments
- Winfield Community UMC
- Wood Dale Community Church
- Woodridge UMC, UMW

**Trust and Estate Giving**

- Ellen B. Fox Fund
- Octavus N. Hutchinson Charitable Trust

**Civic and Nonprofit Organization Support**

- American Legion Auxiliary Post 680
- Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital
- Communities That Care Inc.
- Downers Grove Junior Women’s Club
- Exchange Club of Naperville
- First NonProfit Foundation
- Fox Valley United Way
- Naperville Evening Kiwanis Club
- Palatine Jaycees
- Play It Forward Kids
- Sheilah A. Doyle Foundation
- United Way of Greater Philadelphia & Southern New Jersey
- United Way of Metropolitan Chicago
- YWCA of Lake Forest
I have learned so much about how to become a better mother and parent.

- Justine*, early childhood mother

*For their privacy, our clients’ names have been changed.
We are grateful to our supporters, who make our 123-year mission possible.

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

Meet Justine and Michael

Justine and her three children, including her two-year-old son Michael, were homeless and living in a women’s shelter in Waukegan when they enrolled in ChildServ’s Lake County early childhood program in January 2016. She had ended an abusive relationship and needed help finding a safe place for her family to live. Justine was also concerned that their housing instability would impact Michael’s ability to succeed in school.

In their first visit, Justine and her ChildServ Parent Educator Vanessa discussed a plan to find the family housing. Justine explained that Michael’s language skills were not developing as quickly as his other siblings and asked Vanessa to bring activities that would improve his speech.

Within a few months, Vanessa helped Justine to sign up for classes at the College of Lake County and find a new apartment for her family. She also connected them with summer enrichment programs through the Boys and Girls Club of Lake County and Mother’s Trust to ensure that the kids had somewhere safe to play while Justine went to class.

During their bimonthly, in-home visits, Vanessa, Justine and Michael continued to work on language activities – singing nursery songs, playing with puppets and rhyming – and Vanessa encouraged Justine to read to Michael as often as possible to increase his vocabulary. Michael also loved playing with blocks and memory cards to improve his motor and early math skills.

Michael is talking now, and both Justine and Michael are on-track to graduate in 2018 – Justine with her Associates Degree and Michael into a local Head Start program.

“In my time with ChildServ, I have learned so much about how to become a better mother and parent. The program has given me a voice and empowered me to be a better woman, and without Vanessa, I wouldn’t have had the things I needed to take care of my children.”
Meet Charlene Carter

Being a foster parent is Charlene Carter’s way of making a difference in the world and in the lives of the kids who are placed into her care. “I want the children who come into my home to know that someone cares for and loves them,” said Carter.

During Charlene’s 32 years as a ChildServ foster parent, she has provided a safe, loving home for more than 30 children and has adopted or been named the legal guardian of 14 others. She first became a foster parent when asked by the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS) to temporarily care for the children of a family member. After they had been successfully reunited with their mother, Charlene realized that she had found her calling. She started researching foster parenting and found ChildServ through Ed Woodley, a member of Carter’s church and a foster care case worker at the agency.

In her more than three decades, she and James, her husband of 18 years, have cared for children who have experienced abuse, neglect and violence.

When they accomplish their goals, I know that I have done my job and given them the love they needed.

- Charlene, foster parent

* For his privacy, the name of the child in foster care has been changed.
LOVING FOSTER HOMES

She credits the family atmosphere of her ChildServ team for helping her kids to succeed.

“I couldn’t do what I do without the help of my team at ChildServ. They are the best, and make sure the child and I have everything we need.”

Charlene acknowledges that fostering is not always easy. “These kids have many challenges, but I believe that if you welcome them with a heart that is ready to give, a little love and patience can go a long way.” One such child is Isaiah*, who came to her care when he was 11 years old.

Isaiah had been hospitalized more than 20 times for behavioral issues associated with bi-polar and Attention-deficit/hyperactivity (ADHD) disorders, and his mother couldn’t take care of him anymore. Charlene met him at the hospital and promised him that he would get the help he needed so that he would never have to go back. Ms. Carter and her ChildServ team made sure that he had the proper medication and regularly attended counseling sessions to begin the process of healing from the trauma of his mother’s decision.

Isaiah later had an opportunity to reunite with his mother but chose to remain with Charlene, saying that the stability and love he felt from her made her house feel like home.

Isaiah thrived in high school, playing football in the fall and wrestling in the winter. He started college in Peoria this past August and already has a job in the school's athletic department.

Charlene also kept her promise to Isaiah as he’s never returned to the hospital.

All of the more than 30 children who have been in Ms. Carter’s care have finished high school and are currently employed. They get together on holidays, birthdays and Mother’s Day, and two years ago, when Charlene and James renewed their vows, more than 100 people attended, including the biological mother of one of Charlene’s foster children, who spoke about the impact Charlene had on her child’s life.

Ms. Carter believes so strongly in the power of fostering that she got her four sisters involved as ChildServ foster parents. She knows that there are many more children who need safe, loving homes to help them reach their potential, and says that while being a foster parent has its challenges, it is also very rewarding.

“These children come into my home after experiencing tough times, and when they accomplish their goals – finishing school, getting a job and starting a family – and take the lessons they learned in my home and apply them to their lives, I know that I have done my job and have given them the love they needed.”

LOVING FOSTER HOMES

We are grateful to our supporters, who make our 123-year mission possible.

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HELP A FUTURE LEADER BY...

Becoming a Loving Foster Parent

DO YOU HAVE A PLACE IN YOUR HEART FOR A CHILD?

DO YOU HAVE A PLACE IN YOUR HOME FOR A CHILD?

THEN YOUR PLACE IS WITH US AT CHILDSERV!

BECOME A FOSTER PARENT AND BUILD A BETTER LIFE FOR A CHILD AT RISK!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT US AT INFO@CHILDSERV.ORG OR (773) 239-8094.
We are grateful to our supporters, who make our 123-year mission possible.

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Providing Guidance as a Mentor

SHARE YOUR TIME AND TALENT WITH A TEENAGER IN ONE OF OUR DUPAGE COUNTY GROUP HOMES!

THE YOUTH IN OUR GROUP HOMES NEED MENTORS TO PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER GUIDANCE TO HELP THEM REACH THEIR POTENTIAL!

FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT ZULMA COLON, INDIVIDUAL ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, AT ZCOLON@CHILDSERV.ORG OR (773) 867-7361.
A FUTURE LEADER THROUGH... A SAFE PLACE TO LIVE

I gained the confidence and skills I needed to move forward and better my life.

- Alyssa*, group home resident

*For her privacy, our client’s name has been changed.

Fiscal Year 2017 Events

Dan Kotowski (left), former Chair of the Board of Trustees Elliot Richardson (second from left) and emcee Patti Vasquez of WGN Radio (right) present the Lucy Rider Meyer Humanitarian Award to Sasser Family Holdings’ Senior Director of Corporate Communications & Marketing Kelly Pronek (center left), Administrative Assistant Brie Mazz (center) and Lawonda Miller (center right), honoring Sasser’s long-standing commitment to the children in our care.

The Gala raised nearly $200,000 to support the children and families in our care.

ChildServ’s Auxiliary Board held its Spring Happy Hour at the offices of Baker McKenzie in Chicago, benefitting the children and families in our early childhood learning programs.

The event raised enough to sponsor a year of home-based services for a child!

Ashanti Madlock-Henderson (right), a member of ChildServ’s Auxiliary Board, and her family, tee off on the first hole at our 2nd Annual BIG Hearts Mini Golf Outing in June, which raised more than $23,000 to ensure the children and families in our early childhood programs reach developmental milestones and become ready to succeed in school.
Meet Alyssa

Alyssa first became a “youth in care” when she was 12 years old after her mother became too sick to care for her. Alyssa was in the middle of school at the time and dealing with her own health issues when the Illinois Department of Child and Families Services (DCFS) relocated her to a residential facility.

Alyssa spent the next few years moving from facility to facility and school to school looking for stability and help. In July 2014, she came to ChildServ’s Naperville group home, a residential program that provides teenage girls ages 12-18 with a safe environment to live, learn and become empowered adults.

There, Alyssa received consistent encouragement to continue high school at Naperville Central and the support of caring, attentive staff members. She made friends with the five other girls at the home and together, they learned life skills like cooking, time management, and budgeting.

She also had an on-site therapist, trained in trauma-informed techniques, to work with her both in weekly sessions and throughout the day on coping skills and self-confidence.

After a few months at the home, Alyssa learned about DCFS’ Youth Advisory Board – an official forum for youth in care to advocate for themselves and their friends and address the department about its policies. She started going to the meetings and through the encouragement of ChildServ’s staff, therapist and her DCFS caseworker, successfully ran for secretary of the regional board, which allowed her to lead discussions between youth and DCFS regarding the department’s policies and procedures.

As Alyssa progressed through the program, she became an officer on the statewide Youth Advisory Board. She also used her new role as an advocate to find her mother an assisted living facility so that she would receive the care and medical attention she needed.

Alyssa is the current president of the Northern Region Youth Advisory Board, which allows her to lead discussions between youth and DCFS regarding the department’s policies and procedures and is also a part-time, paid position. She graduated from Naperville Central High School and ChildServ’s group home in 2017, and has successfully transitioned into a program that has her on the path toward independent living.

“ChildServ’s staff helped me a lot while I was there, and I gained the confidence and skills I needed to move forward and better my life.”
A FUTURE LEADER THROUGH... ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE

Meet Malissa

Malissa first heard about ChildServ’s Emerge program while living at Breakthrough Women’s Center, a homeless shelter in Chicago. With her mother incarcerated, she had no support system and was struggling to take care of her daughter and son. Malissa knew that she needed help to get her life on track so that she could be self-sufficient and a good mom to her children.

Malissa enrolled in Emerge in August of 2016. After moving into her apartment, she met with her ChildServ case manager, Kimberly Jackson-Miller, to establish personal and professional goals that would allow her – after completing the program – to support herself and her children. She also started counseling with her ChildServ Therapist Jaleesa Pirtle to work through the trauma of homelessness, improve her social and emotional skills and better navigate family issues.

Malissa’s first step toward self-sufficiency was to earn her high school diploma. With Kim’s help, she registered at Sister Jean Hughes Adult High School in Chicago, taking classes four nights a week in computers, language arts, and math. Once she had settled into school, Kim helped Malissa create a resume so that she could apply for jobs. She went on a few interviews before finding part-time employment at McDonald’s.

She regularly attended Emerge’s monthly meetings where she became friends with other clients and learned life skills like financial literacy and the importance of savings for her future. After that meeting, she asked Kim to assist her in setting up a savings account at Chase Bank so that she could keep her paychecks from work in a secure place.

Malissa is on-track to graduate from the Emerge program in 2018 with stable housing and the knowledge and skills she needs to be independent. She earned her GED certificate in June of 2017 and plans to continue her studies at Malcolm X College in Chicago, pursuing a career in healthcare. She has made great progress on her treatment goals in her counseling sessions with Jaleesa, identifying emotions and using coping skills to break the cycle of trauma and improve life for her family.

“I want to thank the entire Emerge team for giving me the confidence to help me believe in myself. Kim and Jaleesa have encouraged me to push for the stars and work hard so that my family and I have bright futures.”

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- Malissa*, Emerge client

*For her privacy, our client’s name has been changed.