



# 2023 Annual Report



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**CHILDREN'S TRUST**  
OF ALACHUA COUNTY

## BOARD



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Chair  
School Board Member



Lee Pinkoson  
Vice Chair  
Gubernatorial Appointee



Ken Cornell  
Treasurer  
County Commissioner



Shane Andrew  
Board Member  
Superintendent of Alachua  
County Public Schools



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Board Member  
Circuit Judge



Dr. Nancy Hardt  
Board Member  
Gubernatorial Appointee



Dr. Maggie Labarta  
Board Member  
Gubernatorial Appointee



Mary Chance  
Board Member  
Gubernatorial Appointee



Cheryl Twombly  
Board Member  
Department of Children  
and Families

4010 NW 25th Place  
Gainesville, FL 32606

# CHILDREN'S TRUST OF ALACHUA COUNTY BUILDING THE FUTURE

Over the last year, the Children's Trust of Alachua County supported over 23,000 children and families through programs and services. What a feat! We also heard from more than 1,100 members of our community through our Listening Project.

Thank you! Thank you to the youth, parents, providers and partners who participated in interviews and focus groups. Thank you to everyone who attended a community meeting or completed a survey to share your thoughts about the needs in our community. We traveled all over the county listening to you. We heard you in Alachua, Archer, Gainesville, Hawthorne, High Springs, La Crosse, Micanopy, Newberry and Waldo. Your input helped to identify programs and goals needed, and you assisted in guiding the creation of our new Strategic Plan.

This year laid the foundation for our future. We grew our impact throughout the county with the programs and services offered, community engagement opportunities, and expanded our partnerships. We were able to serve and support more families, children and youth than ever before.

The Children's Trust of Alachua County is making a difference in the community. We are learning from you, and we are listening to you. We will continue to invest in the growth and development of grassroots organizations as they build capacity to serve more families and children. We will continue in partnership with local municipalities and community funders to build a coordinated comprehensive system of supports to ensure that every child and youth reaches their maximum potential.



Marsha Kiner  
Executive Director



Tina Certain  
Chair  
School Board Member



# HISTORY

Voters approve a referendum creating the Children's Trust of Alachua County

2018

The newly formed Children's Trust board convenes its first meeting in March and approves its first budget in June

2019

Listening Project begins

2022

Strategic Plan for 2023-2026 created and adopted

2023

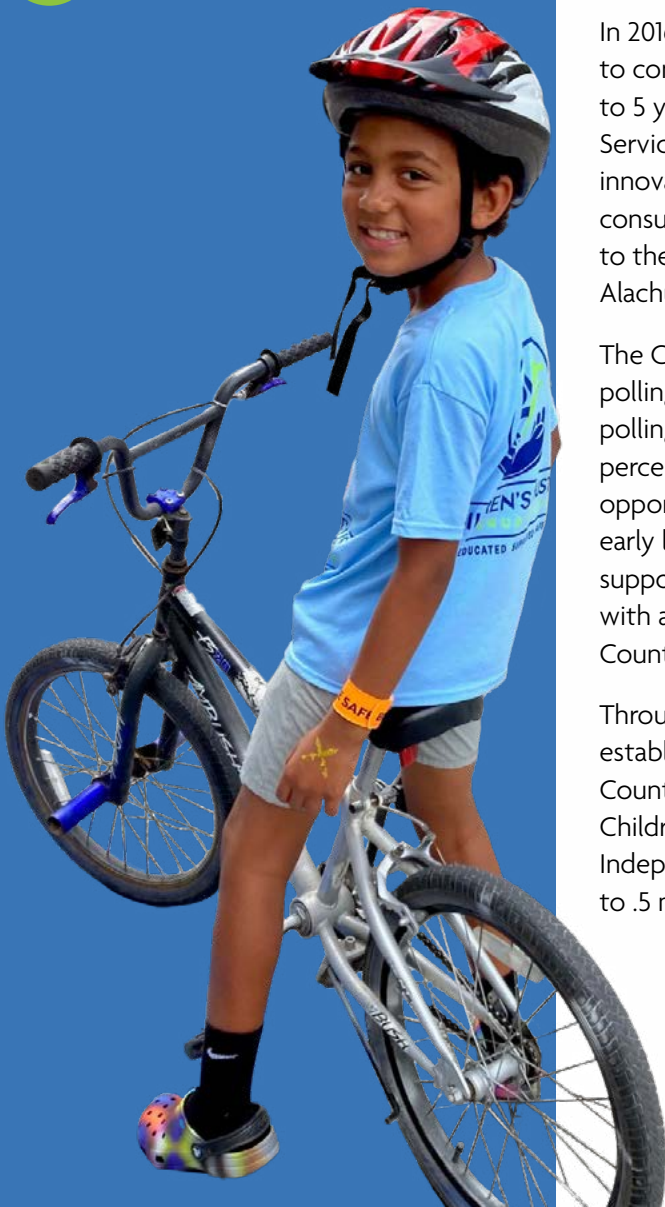
The Campaign for the Children's Trust of Alachua County started as a grassroots movement made up of parents, grandparents, child advocates and local activists. They knew our community could do more to support local children. Local data collected and shared by experts who serve children and youth in Alachua County supported those citizens' beliefs and lived experiences.

As early as 2002, the idea of creating a Children's Services Council (CSC) in Alachua County was being considered. None of those early efforts gained sufficient momentum to move forward. By 2015, however, certain projects helped crystallize the concept of a CSC. Community members, leaders and stakeholders — including the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC), the Greater Gainesville Chamber of Commerce, the University of Florida, Santa Fe College, the Alachua County Children's Alliance, United Way, Partnership for Strong Families, and Alachua County Public Schools — began to revisit the idea. These citizens and organizations hosted many community input sessions and public meetings to discuss the path forward.

In 2016, the BoCC contracted with the WellFlorida Council ([wellflorida.org](http://wellflorida.org)) to conduct a children's needs assessment, with a focus on children prenatal to 5 years old. The BoCC also voted to establish a dependent Children's Services Advisory Board (CSAB). The CSAB was tasked with recommending innovative and creative programs to serve young children, gather data, consult with existing programs, and ultimately make a recommendation to the BoCC regarding the advisability of creating an independent CSC in Alachua County.

The Campaign for the Children's Trust of Alachua County conducted polling to ascertain the level of commitment from the community. That polling showed residents supported the initiative, with local voters perceiving literacy, after-school learning, nutrition, and vocational opportunities as the most important things which could be funded, with early learning and return on investment messages receiving the strongest support. In February 2018, the BoCC unanimously voted to move forward with a voter referendum to create and fund the Children's Trust of Alachua County.

Through these efforts, the Children's Trust of Alachua County was established according to Section 125.901 Florida Statutes and Alachua County Ordinance 18-08. In November 2018, the voters approved the Children's Trust referendum by over 61% of the votes. As a Special Independent District with taxing authority, the Children's Trust can levy up to .5 mill, resulting in annual estimated revenues over \$8,000,000.



# INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023, the Children's Trust supported providers in serving more than **23,000** children across Alachua County to support our goals of children being **healthy, educated, supported and safe**.

## GOAL 1

Children are born healthy & remain healthy.

4,374 Children  
1,409 Parents  
30 Professionals

**5,813 Total**



## GOAL 2

Children learn what they need to be successful.

11,203 Children  
86 Parents  
248 Professionals

**11,537 Total**



23,518 Children  
3,321 Parents  
340 Professionals

**27,179\* Total**

## GOAL 3

Children have nurturing & supportive caregivers & relationships.

881 Children  
1,826 Parents  
8 Professionals

**2,715 Total**



## GOAL 4

Children live in a safe community.

7,060 Children  
0 Parents  
54 Professionals

**7,114 Total**



Photos, 1-4: Lee's Fun To Learn Day Care Center, Pattie Cake Christian Academy, Akwaaba Freedom School, SWAG Family Resource Center

\*Duplication may occur across programs

# OUR PATHWAY

## Improving Child Outcomes

Fiscal Year 2023 (Oct. 1, 2022- Sept. 30, 2023)

Children are born healthy & remain healthy.

<b>347 pregnant women:</b> Family Partner	▶	Support maternal and child health
<b>625 families with newborns:</b> NewboRN		
<b>24 adolescent girls:</b> Pace Center for Girls	▶	Support mental health and substance abuse prevention
<b>81 children:</b> Child Advocacy Center		
<b>458 adolescent youth:</b> PALS	▶	Support physical health
<b>310 children:</b> Wellness Coordinator		
<b>2,098 children:</b> Saving Smiles		
<b>778 children:</b> Hunger Backpack Program	▶	Improve food security



Children learn what they need to be successful.

<b>36 teachers:</b> TPD Professional Development	▶	Support professional development and capacity building
<b>16 owners/directors:</b> V'Locity Master Class		
<b>16 owners/directors:</b> Accreditation Academy	▶	Expand access to high-quality childcare, after-school and summer programs
<b>56 children:</b> Head Start Summer Bridge		
<b>385 children:</b> After-school Programs	▶	Support literacy and other academic supports
<b>1,351 children:</b> Summer Camps		
<b>6,933 children:</b> Enrichment Programs		
<b>534 children:</b> Imagination Library	▶	Support career exploration and preparation
<b>116 children:</b> Bridge Literacy Program		
<b>939 children:</b> Operation Full STEAM	▶	
<b>50 children:</b> Freedom Schools		
<b>422 children:</b> New Tech Now	▶	
<b>215 children:</b> TeensWork Alachua		



Children have nurturing & supportive caregivers & relationships.

<b>127 children:</b> Help Me Grow	▶	Support initiatives that connect families to resources
<b>1,791 parents:</b> Family Resource Centers		
<b>23 parents:</b> Project YouthBuild Parenting Program	▶	Improve family strengthening and support
<b>20 parents / early care professionals:</b> Summer School for Parents and Professionals		



Children live in a safe community.

<b>58 children:</b> Big Brothers, Big Sisters	▶	Support initiatives that prevent delinquency / truancy
<b>226 children:</b> Midnight Basketball	▶	Support violence prevention initiatives
<b>6,776 children:</b> Peaceful Paths Prevention Program		



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Children's Trust of Alachua County engages with community nonprofits, businesses, grassroots organizations, community leaders, chambers of commerce and city councils.

Throughout 2023, we visited and supported events throughout Alachua County, including in Alachua, Archer, Gainesville, Hawthorne, High Springs, Micanopy, Newberry and Waldo.



The Children's Trust of Alachua County, above, joined in the UF Homecoming festivities this year, marching in the Oct. 6 parade.

The **Lights On Afterschool** annual event, co-hosted in 2023 by Deeper Purpose Kids Academy, brought children of all ages to Camp Kalaqua in High Springs on Oct. 26. The national program, a project of Afterschool Alliance, highlights the importance of after-school programs for America's children, families and communities. The day was formally recognized as Lights On Afterschool Day via proclamations from both the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners and (pictured above) High Springs Mayor Gloria James. At right, a group of children from Deeper Purpose performed during the event.



# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Children's Trust collaborates with local organizations and businesses for joint events and community projects that align with our organizational goals.

## EXAMPLES OF OUR PARTNERSHIPS INCLUDE:

**Alachua County schools, PTAs and educational institutions** to provide opportunities that benefit students and the community.



New Tech Now/Alachua PTA, Archer Elementary



Gun Violence Prevention Resource Fair

**Chambers and community groups** are vital to our partnerships because we can connect with neighborhood associations, clubs, advocacy groups and local businesses. We are members of the **Chambers of Commerce in Alachua, Gainesville, Hawthorne, High Springs and Newberry**, and have worked in tandem with the **Rural Women's Health Project** and **5th Avenue Neighborhood Association, Inc.**

**Cultural institutions**, such as museums, art galleries, or cultural centers, celebrate diversity and cultural awareness through organized events. We love our partners at **Harn Museum of Art at the University of Florida.**

**Local governments and nonprofit agencies** to address community needs and promote initiatives that improve the quality of life for residents. We also are members of the **Florida Alliance of Children's Councils and Trusts (FACCT)** to promote policies and legislation that help improve the lives of children, our youth, and their families.

This year, the Children's Trust of Alachua County partnered with **United Way of North Central Florida** and participated in the **Alachua County Legislative Delegation** meeting.



Rural Women's Health Project





World's Greatest Baby Shower event by the Kiwanis Club

**Civic and social organizations** support our commitment to community service and social causes. Organizations include the **Gainesville Rotary Club, Woman Club of High Springs, Kiwanis Club, High Springs Women's Club** and **Sunrise Rotary Club.**

**Healthcare providers** help with health-related workshops and referrals for families who need screenings and wellness care. Partners include **UF Health Shands Hospital** and **Florida Department of Health.**

**Faith-based organizations** work with us on joint projects that address community needs. We partner with several **local churches** and **ministerial associations** to help address community concerns.

**Universities and colleges** such as **University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine** and **Santa Fe College** strengthen our research, collaborations and community-based learning initiatives.

**Media outlets** help to amplify the Children's Trust programs and services throughout the county. We have recently been featured on **Tu Fiesta Radio** and **Main Street Daily News.**



Trinity's Day Spa Back 2 School Braid Bash



100 Black Men of Greater Florida, 5th Annual Aviation Academy



Prayer Breakfast at Grace at Fort Clarke Church



2023 Disability Resource Expo



Gainesville Fire Rescue Screaming for Safety event

# SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorship funding provides a way for the Children’s Trust to partner with community agencies and businesses as they engage the community in ways that benefit and support the children and families of Alachua County. The Children’s Trust sponsored 48 events this year.



Greater Duval Afterschool



Alachua County Library Waldo Branch-STEM Open House



Greater Duval



New Tech Now

100 Black Men of Greater Florida GNV, Inc.	Renascence Beautillion-Cotillion Ball & 5th annual Aviation Academy
Aqua Angels Artistic Swimming	Alice in Wonderland Water Show
Alachua County Child Abuse Prevention Task Force	Celebrate the Child 2023
Alachua County Council of PTAs	2023 Disability Resource Expo
Alicia Pfahler Counseling, Inc.	I Got Your Back Mentoring Groups
Amiron Financial Literacy Initiative	Children’s Financial Education Workshop
Archer Cultural Progressive Organization	College Prep Seminar
Balance 180 Gymnastics & Sports Academy	Banner Sponsorship & Flip-or-Treat Fall Festival
Blossoming Butterfly, Inc.	Pink Fest
BLSSD Future, Inc.	Teach Me to Dance
Children Beyond Our Borders, Inc.	CBOB Back to School Health Fair
Children’s Forum, Inc.	Children’s Week
Circle of Common Purpose for Alachua	School Bash Together We Can End Gun Violence
City of Gainesville	Choose Peace: Gun Violence Must Cease Gun Violence Prevention Summit
City of Waldo	Fall Festival
Concerned Citizens of Newberry, Inc.	Back to School Backpack event
Crafty Gemini Youth Development, Inc.	Annual Free Spring Fundamental Basketball Skills Camp
Cultural Arts Coalition, Inc.	43rd annual 5th Avenue Arts Festival
Darn the Torpedoes, LLC	The BASH Music Festival, Tiny Bashers Corner
DaySpring Missionary Baptist Church	DaySpring Community Outreach
Deeper Purpose Community Church	Back to School Supply and Item Giveaway
Dream on Purpose, Inc.	Career Launch Intensive
Education Equalizer Foundation	College Prep 101
Episcopal Children’s Services	Creating Strong & Supportive Bond with Your Children-Parent Conference
Episcopal Children’s Services	Wild Reading Safari
Everyone Loves Oneanother Foundation, Inc.	ELO Fest
Friends of BCG, Inc.	Back to School Classroom Supplies
Gainesville Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta	Youth Summit 2023
Gainesville Brothers in Action	Community Egg Hunt
GNV Bridge (formerly Vineyard Christian Fellowship)	Reading coaches & student event
Grace to Overcome, Inc.	Strong-Safe & Equipped Youth
Hawthorne Youth Sports, Inc.	Back to School Drive-Hawthorne
High Springs Chamber of Commerce	3rd Annual Back to School Giveaway
Just Between Friends	Safe Kids Day
Leap Girl, Leap, Inc.	Leap Girl Lemonade Summer Gathering
Manhood Youth Development Foundation, Inc.	SY 2022-2023 Civil Rights Spring Break “Road Trip”
New Technology Made Simple Now	Digital Storytelling & Healthy Kids Event
PAVE People Against Gun Violence Enterprises: Cease Fire	Backpacks and School Supplies event
Rural Women’s Health Project	Mother’s Day event
Soar Mentoring Services	2nd annual East Gainesville Backyard BBQ
Sweetwater Square Apartments	Fall Festival
The Concrete Rose Foundation	Three-day HBCU college tour
The Education Foundation of Alachua County	31st Teacher of the Year event
The Finer Foundation of Florida, Inc.	Gun Violence Prevention Resource Fair
Trinity’s Day Spa	Back 2 School Braid Bash
Waldo Community New Vision Coalition, Inc.	2023 Back to School Fun Day
Waldo Community New Vision Coalition, Inc.	Education Health Fair
Youth Council, Alachua County Branch of NAACP	1st Annual Fundraiser Brunch and Panel Discussion

# EMERGENT NEEDS

The Emergent Needs Fund supports those offering services to children and their families when crisis situations may jeopardize their services. Funds in this special category are limited and on a one-time-only basis during any fiscal year. These funds are available to any organization in the community that serves children. Two organizations received much-needed funding for emergency situations impacting children and their families.

**Peaceful Paths** received support for damage caused by a lightning strike, and **The Academy at the Family Church** received support to help replace A/C units for its preschool.

“What a blessing!! This is huge for us. I can not thank the BOD enough for your support and the support of the Children’s Trust.”  
— **Patrick Bizub**, Director of Operations, The Family Church



“When community funders step up in emergencies, it demonstrates their commitment to the work we do by ensuring that critical funds for services are diverted to cover operations. Thank you, Children’s Trust, for recognizing and meeting the need!”

— **Dr. Theresa Beachy**  
Executive Director, Peaceful Paths



UF Health Shands Bike Rodeo & Safety Fair event

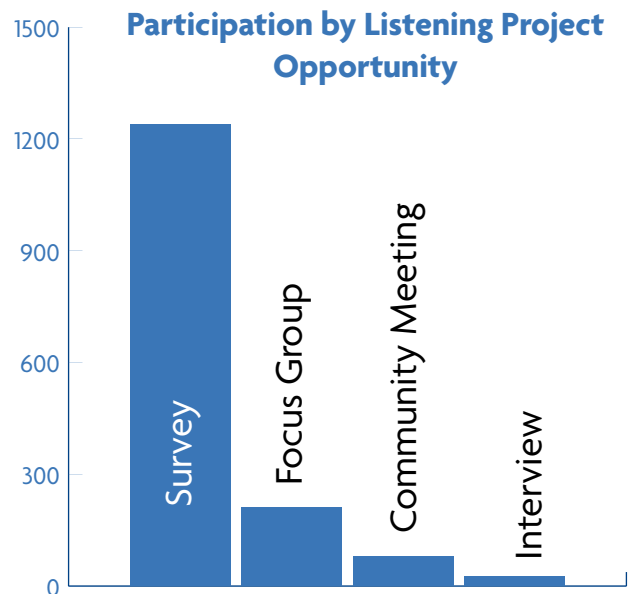
# LISTENING PROJECT SUMMARY & STRATEGIC PLAN



Community members at a Listening Project focus group session.

The Children’s Trust recognizes the value of community voices and having regular and ongoing feedback and partnership with the community we serve. These voices are essential to drive how we best invest our funds, define our role, and measure our success. The Trust began its Listening Project in August 2022 and contracted with Prismatic Services to support this major endeavor. Through our Listening Project, we heard from hundreds of parents, youth, service providers and partners. Residents and families had the opportunity to be heard through surveys, interviews, focus groups and community meetings.

The Listening Project identified areas of strengths, such as friendly neighbors, a sense of community, and the willingness to work together. Listening Project participants also identified many services and resources they felt are needed.



Children’s Trust board member and County Commissioner Ken Cornell, center, during a Listening Project steering committee meeting.

# Service and Resource Needs Identified Through the Listening Project

<b>After-school &amp; Summer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More opportunities</li> <li>• Homework help</li> <li>• Recreation</li> <li>• Free or reduced scholarships</li> <li>• More programs</li> <li>• Summer camps</li> </ul>	<b>Children &amp; Youth Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor program</li> <li>• Program for teen parents</li> <li>• Employment opportunities</li> <li>• Support groups</li> <li>• Counseling &amp; behavioral support</li> </ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County-wide literacy plan</li> <li>• Vocational training</li> <li>• Tutoring</li> <li>• Scholarships</li> <li>• Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Career exploration</li> <li>• Career center</li> <li>• Affordable/accessible Pre-K</li> </ul>	<b>Schools-General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community elementaries</li> <li>• Revised discipline approach</li> <li>• Safety patrol</li> <li>• Mental health counselors</li> <li>• All treated with respect</li> <li>• More clubs</li> <li>• Students select classes</li> <li>• Relevant coursework</li> <li>• Improve school meals</li> </ul>
<b>Schools-Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separate elementary and high school students</li> <li>• Address bullying</li> <li>• Safer bus stops</li> <li>• Provide late buses</li> </ul>	<b>Schools-Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean/upgrade bathrooms</li> <li>• Fix air conditioning</li> <li>• Better desks</li> <li>• Facility upgrades so all schools have same quality</li> <li>• More playgrounds</li> </ul>
<b>Recreation &amp; Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide late buses</li> <li>• More public sports facilities</li> <li>• Greater variety of sports options</li> <li>• Free/subsidized sports</li> <li>• Larger recreational facility, open daily</li> <li>• Field trips</li> <li>• Playgrounds, trails, parks, pool, arts, crafts, cooking, dance</li> </ul>	<b>Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hospital/healthcare accessible in rural areas</li> <li>• Dental screenings</li> <li>• Health insurance</li> <li>• 24-hour EMS</li> <li>• Address childhood obesity</li> <li>• More programs prenatal to age 5</li> <li>• Behavioral support training</li> <li>• Mental health counseling</li> </ul>
<b>Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add police substation</li> <li>• More police patrols in communities</li> <li>• Violence prevention</li> <li>• Gun safety awareness</li> <li>• More lights</li> <li>• Safer roads, better road maintenance</li> </ul>	<b>Public Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase services</li> <li>• Keep it free for children</li> <li>• Expand to rural areas</li> <li>• Larger buses</li> <li>• Add sidewalks</li> <li>• Safer and closer bus stops</li> <li>• Shelter and bench at bus stops</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Database of services</li> <li>• Larger library</li> <li>• Technology access</li> <li>• Communications about resources</li> </ul>	<b>Parent Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parenting classes</li> <li>• Family life center</li> <li>• Family counseling</li> </ul>



Eleven proposed recommendations center around the areas identified as most in need of the Children's Trust's support.

## PRIORITY ISSUES

- 1 Adopt explicit dollar spend goals for each age group rather than for each goal.
- 2 Address the transportation divide.
- 3 Incubate new programs.
- 4 Support community centers and sports.
- 5 Become the marketplace for interns and community supporters/organizers.
- 6 Become the county fulcrum for information.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

- 7 Listen continually.
- 8 Communicate regularly.
- 9 Leverage community.
- 10 Revise Trust principles, then set measurable annual goals.
- 11 Adopt better metrics of output and impact.



UF Homecoming Parade

# THE STRATEGIC PLAN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2018, Alachua County voters approved the Children's Trust referendum by over 61% of the votes. As a Special Independent District with taxing authority, the Trust can levy up to .5 mill, resulting in annual estimated revenues of over \$8 million. The Children's Trust of Alachua County was established to provide children's services throughout Alachua County.

Last fiscal year, over *18,000 opportunities for children* and families resulted from the programs and services planned and funded by the Children's Trust of Alachua County, more than double the previous year's reach. Following this tremendous growth in reach and impact, the Children's Trust began the process to assess its current impact and better understand the community's needs.

In September 2022, the Children's Trust commissioned a Listening Project to actively solicit the opinions of the community. The Listening Project had three major goals:

- **Ensure** that the Trust's various stakeholders have meaningful input into the Children's Trust's strategic planning.
- **Reveal** findings that will allow the Trust to develop priorities and strategies to address the identified needs and gaps while utilizing and mobilizing existing community strengths and resources.
- **Maximize** the impact of Children's Trust resources in addressing the needs of Alachua County children.

The results of the Listening Project have been incorporated into the Strategic Planning process through the thoughtful consideration of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was composed of members of the Children's Trust Board of Directors, staff, providers and community stakeholders. The Steering Committee held regular meetings to review the results of the Listening Project, the Comprehensive Strengths and Needs Assessment, an environmental scan, and other supporting documents to guide the development of the new strategic plan.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

An investment roadmap co-created by Alachua County residents, providers and community partners is needed to best serve children and families based on the strengths, resources and gaps in services within the county.

The Children's Trust of Alachua County funds and supports a coordinated system of community services that allows all youth and their families to thrive.

**1** Initiatives should ensure accessibility to universal supports for all children 0 to 18 and their families, targeted supports for those who need additional help, and place-based supports for those with the greatest need.

**2** Innovative initiatives should be funded that coordinate comprehensive systems of support and delivers those supports in collaborative ways that allows the Children's Trust to achieve collective impact.

**3** Initiatives shall be evaluated based on their ability to ultimately impact all children and youth, directly or indirectly, with a priority for long-term continual return on investment.

**4** Initiatives must be measurable with priority given to a comprehensive system of supports that provide for prevention, timely intervention and services that strengthen families and produce achievable results.

**5** Initiatives must be aligned to a documented gap or need.

**6** Funds will be invested and initiatives will be prioritized based on the highest educational, social, or emotional outcome value.

**7** Initiatives will be evaluated in an open, transparent, and competitive manner in order to ensure equitable results and confidence in the process.

**8** The Children's Trust values fiscal and operational accountability and will fund partners in a manner that rewards efficiencies, takes advantage of

economies of scale, and maximizes services to children or family members/support members in order to meet the educational, social, emotional and/or physical health.

**9** The complete portfolio of Children's Trust investments shall be reviewed to ensure that Alachua County children, youth and families have equitable access to services that will work to increase racial equity.

**10** Prior to any funding decision, the direct impact on children and youth must be the primary consideration.



Photo:  
Kids Count

## CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The Children's Trust of Alachua County continues to improve processes and infrastructure to strategically evaluate progress in child well-being regularly and meaningfully.

To develop a collaborative dialogue, the Children's Trust initiated a **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)** process to provide a way to systematically review, share results and support improvements. The CQI process builds on the previous **Results-Based Accountability (RBA) Framework**. This comprehensive review of data on program performance measures and administrative processes promotes shared reflection and planning on a regular, cyclical basis. This new system was developed through feedback from our **Listening Project** community participants. After initial

development, service providers were also given opportunity to offer input on the CQI tool and process.

In the fall, the Board approved a Data Collection and Management Policy which adopted guidelines to govern the Children's Trust's work specific to data collection, protection and usage. This laid the foundation for procuring the SAMIS data system to better leverage information on the results of services. The new system will improve efficiency in working with providers to effectively manage data and processes such as contract management, program deliverables and evaluation. Performance measures include **effort** ("How much?"), **quality** ("How well?") and **effectiveness** ("Better Off?"). The Children's Trust anticipates all providers will be using SAMIS during the 2023-2024 fiscal year.



This Strategic Plan is a roadmap to guide service delivery planning and to inform funding investments for children, youth and families in Alachua County. It is informed by the wisdom of youth, parents, service providers, community partners and the staff of the Children's Trust of Alachua County through an intentional process. The plan is the product of input and considerations from:

**Environmental Scan**

Analysis of the external community factors that present needs and opportunities for future investment.

**Listening Project**

A 10-month effort to connect with diverse youth, parents, service providers and partners at large to understand their perspectives on priority issues impacting all children, birth to 18.

**Steering Committee**

Strategic Planning advisory group comprised of Children's Trust staff, Board of Directors, community stakeholders and providers.



**Goal 1**  
 Children and youth are healthy and have nurturing caregivers and relationships.

**Goal 2**  
 Children and youth can learn what they need to be successful.

**Goal 3**  
 Children and youth live in a safe community.

**Approach**  
 System Building/ Refining

**Definition**  
 Participate in efforts to align, coordinate, and strengthen the service delivery systems.

**Approach**  
 Services

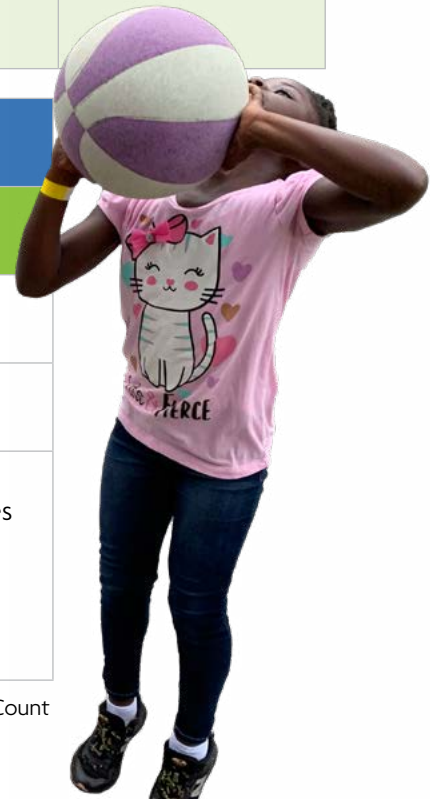
**Definition**  
 To expand/refine the array of services that have been identified to have the greatest impact on children and youth in Alachua County.



YMCA - Archer

Goal 1: Children and youth are healthy and have nurturing caregivers and relationships.		
Area of Focus	Financial Resources	Approach
Maternal Child Health Programs (home visiting program, doula services, etc.)	50%	Services
Access to comprehensive care		System building/ Refining & services
Care coordination & navigation services		System building/ Refining & services
Family Resource Centers		System building/ Refining & services
System of care-building with partners & families		System building/ Refining & services

Goal 2: Children and youth can learn what they need to be successful.		
Area of Focus	Financial Resources	Approach
Quality Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (outreach & messaging)	35%	System building/ Refining & services
Equitable participation in quality early care & education		System building/ Refining & services
Mentoring & character-building programs		Services
Out-of-school-time activities (after-school, camp, sports, tutoring, etc.)		Services
Community advisory board strategically partner with: the school district, funded providers, community organizations and families to create comprehensive solutions for increasing math and literacy proficiency		System building/ Refining & services



Goal 3: Children and youth live in a safe community.		
Area of Focus	Financial Resources	Approach
Out-of-school-time activities (after-school, camp, sports, etc.)	10%	Services
Mentoring & character-building programs		Services
<b>Community Safety Convenor/Participant</b> working with municipalities, law enforcement, schools, library, DJJ and River Phoenix and a youth advisory board, etc. to include a focus on gun violence to see community-level improvement		System building/ Refining & services

Kids Count

## Strategic Plan Implementation Timeline

This tentative timeline will support the Children’s Trust team in aligning with the Science of Implementation approach to increase the likelihood of collaborating with strong partners. This timeline will be adapted to the emergent needs and opportunities of the community.



City of Gainesville Parks and Rec Kids Holiday Event

October 23 - March 24	Bridge Funding
January 24 - March 24	Release New Priority Funding (RFP)
January 24 - September 26	Multi Year Funding for New Priority Areas



### Core Indicators

Kids Count

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3
Children and youth are healthy and have nurturing caregivers and relationships.	Children and youth can learn what they need to be successful.	Children and youth live in a safe community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant mortality</li> <li>• Low birthweight babies</li> <li>• Prenatal care</li> <li>• Oral health</li> <li>• Hospitalizations for self-inflicted injuries</li> <li>• Youth who felt sad or hopeless for 2 weeks or more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VPK enrollment</li> <li>• Quality childcare enrollment</li> <li>• Children Ready for Kindergarten</li> <li>• Chronic absence</li> <li>• 3rd grade math and reading</li> <li>• High school graduation rates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verified abuse &amp; neglect</li> <li>• Domestic violence</li> <li>• Truancy</li> <li>• Youth arrests</li> </ul>

# AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

In addition to supporting students' academic achievements, after-school programs help students build character and develop new social skills.

Trust-funded after-school programs offer Alachua County youth an endless choice of academic and social sessions, as well as creative activities that provide fun and motivating ways for youth to play, learn and develop new skills and experiences.

The Children's Trust funds after-school program providers to host kindergarteners through 12th-graders from low-income families, with safe and enriching programs to support working families during out-of-school hours.

## SPOTLIGHT ON: DEEPER PURPOSE

Deeper Purpose Community Church's after-school program serves children from kindergarten through 6th grade residing in High Springs and is accredited under the Green Apple Association of Children Services.

This organization offers youth continued learning through structured, top-rated curriculum, in addition to providing tutoring and homework help. When youth do not have homework, skill-building is a focus each day to prevent them from falling behind.

Awarding Trust funding to Deeper Purpose has increased access to after-school programming for families in rural High Springs, a known area with limited after-school options for children. Deeper Purpose also exposes after-school youth to civic engagement opportunities to ensure the youth understand the importance of giving back to their community.



### Our after-school providers:

- Aces in Motion
- Boys and Girls Club
- Deeper Purpose
- Gainesville Circus Center
- Girls Place
- Kids Count

**FY2023 expenditures  
(all programs):  
\$827,295.42**



Kids Count



Deeper Purpose

# PERFORMANCE MEASURES

## ALL CHILDREN'S TRUST-FUNDED AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

### How Much?

Measure	Target	Actual
Children enrolled	301	385
Program days	1,191	1,400

Note: Data and site profile information submitted by providers.

### How Well?

Measure	Target	Actual
Attendance	80%	65%
Site monitoring	Compliance	100% of sites fully compliant
Communication	90%	96%
Overall experience	90%	97%

### Better Off?

Measure	Target	Actual
Homework help	85%	90%
Child was safe	90%	96%
Child enjoyment	90%	94%
Staff relationship	90%	95%



# SUMMER PROGRAMS

Family support needs extend year-round, and so do Children’s Trust-funded programs. Summertime offerings extend youth educational opportunities, aiming to reduce the “summer slide” while also providing fun, safe activities to keep young minds active when school is out of session.

**FY2023 expenditures (all programs): \$1,606,972**



## TRAVELING ART CAMP, LLC

This program instructs youth in painting, sketching, sculpting, pottery, resin work, miniature art design, tile art, jewelry design, sewing/fashion design, mixed-media design, multi-media design, photography/photo shoots and filmmaking. Each child is also able to take home completed projects and other supplies.

### Success Story:

Art is therapeutic for the mind, body and spirit. Traveling Art Camp serves a high number of children in foster care who came with behavioral issues due to trauma. The foster families expressed how grateful they were for the scholarships and that they loved being able to place their kids in a creative summer camp to keep them busy.

One young lady came in with a big chip on her shoulder, refusing to listen and being disruptive. She was

eased into a few crafting classes, eventually finding two activities that calmed her, jewelry design and tiny architecture design. She spent hours creating them and the pride was visible in her smile when she finished her masterpieces. She turned out to be one of the kindest, gentlest, most creative children, and she finally knew it herself. Self-confidence is what she found, along with her inner artist and few good friends at Traveling Art Camp.

## YMCA 2023 SUMMER CAMPS

The YMCA 2023 summer camps provided recreational and educational programs for youth throughout Alachua County, with sites in Archer, Gainesville, Hawthorne, Micanopy and Waldo. Partnerships and collaborations helped expand access to children from four rural communities, as well. Campers enjoyed healthy meals, weekly swimming, STEM programming, sports, dance, visual arts and more.



YMCA Summer Camp Micanopy

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

(For all summer camps)

### How Much?

Measure	Target	Actual
Children enrolled	1,417	1,351
Program days	881	860

Note: Data and site profile information submitted by providers.

### How Well?

Measure	Target	Actual
Attendance	75%	77%
Site monitoring	Compliance	63% of sites fully compliant
Communication	85%	94%
Overall experience	85%	96%

### Better Off?

Measure	Target	Actual
Child was safe	90%	94%
Learning activities	90%	93%
Child enjoyment	90%	95%
Activities were great	90%	96%



**AKWAABA FREEDOM SCHOOL** is a six-week summer reading enrichment program serving students in grades K-8. Freedom Schools, designed by the Children’s Defense Fund, are offered at no cost to families in communities where enrichment programs are scarce or cost-prohibitive. The program offers a fun, high-quality reading curriculum, as well as math and science instruction, physical activities, arts, and other enrichment activities like money management.

**Success Story:**

A returning scholar demonstrated tremendous growth in just one year. During summer 2022, the child began reading aloud in Freedom School, which was a significant feat for him. This past summer, he showed he was a strong, confident reader. He was recognized for his efforts, winning the “Best Reader” award for Akwaaba Freedom School summer 2023. His parents were amazed.

**Scholar Quote:**

“I think the books were chosen for a reason. They mean something to us. The books we read at school sometimes feel so random.”

**Parent Quotes:**

“This is my first time with my scholar participating and it is an amazing program. I have seen changes in a positive way, and it certainly helped me as a single parent.”

“It was an awesome experience for my kid, and it was an awesome feeling for us as parents to see the reflection of confidence and better reading capability.”

“My child is excited every day about going to Freedom School. He’s excited to read and has become extremely social and has stepped up as a leader.”

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

**How Much?**

Measure	Target	Actual
Children enrolled	50	50
Program days	30	28

*Note: Data and site profile information submitted by providers.*

**How Well?**

Measure	Target	Actual
Attendance	85%	93%
Parent/caregiver involvement	50%	82%
Communication satisfaction	85%	87%
Overall experience	90%	97%

**Better Off?**

Measure	Target	Actual
Improve or maintain reading scores	80%	94%
Confidence gained	90%	100%
Safety satisfaction	90%	97%
Activity satisfaction	90%	97%



Both photos: Akwaaba Freedom School

## HEAD START SUMMER BRIDGE

Summer Bridge is an eight-week, voluntary program designed for families to take advantage of continued early learning during the summer when Head Start programs are normally closed. Head Start is a free program for children of families with low incomes, providing comprehensive early learning in both center-based and home-based settings. Episcopal Children's Services programs use a "whole child" approach that helps with intellectual, emotional and social growth, ensuring children's readiness for school and increasing parental knowledge in children's growth and development. The extension of this program during the summer months offers a preventive measure to summer slide, provides continued support to families, and helps to retain talent at early learning centers.

Community Partner:

**Episcopal Children's Services, Inc.**

- Started **June 5**
- Length: **8 weeks**
- **4** Early Learning Centers
- **56 Children** ages 3 to 5
- Centers located in **High Springs, Newberry, Archer** and **Gainesville**

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

### How Much?

Measure	Target	Actual
Children enrolled	59	56
Program days	35	38

*Note: Data and site profile information submitted by providers.*

### How Well?

Measure	Target	Actual
Attendance	75%	71%
Communication	85%	91%
Overall experience	90%	96%

### Better Off?

Measure	Target	Actual
Child enjoyment	90%	94%
Learning activities	90%	90%
Developmental gains (parent report)	70%	96%



Ribbon-cutting ceremony at Episcopal Children's Services. (Photo above courtesy of Seth Johnson/Mainstreet Daily News)



Ribbon-cutting ceremony at Episcopal Children's Services.



# BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE FOR EARLY LEARNING

## MASTER CLASS AND ACCREDITATION ACADEMY

### WHAT IS IT?

The **Business and Leadership Institute for Early Learning (BLI) Master Class Series** empowers business professional and entrepreneur in the industry of childcare. The Master Class series is designed for owners and operators of early learning centers and home-based facilities, as well as those planning to open a childcare business. The curriculum focuses on performance-based business strategies resulting in growth and prosperity in order

to offer quality care and education. The program also focuses on the social significance of this work and its essential role in the economics of the community. Lessons in finance, marketing, human resources and real estate are typically delivered on-site by subject matter experts from the local business community. Once accepted to the Master Class, participants are eligible for acceptance to the Children's Trust Accreditation Academy.

### PARTNERSHIPS



### HOW IT STARTED

Combining forces with the Greater Gainesville Chamber of Commerce and the Early Learning Coalition of Alachua County, we launched Dinner and a Conversation for Childcare Owners/Directors followed by a Community Roundtable on the business of the childcare industry.



**3** community roundtables  
**3** dinners and a conversation

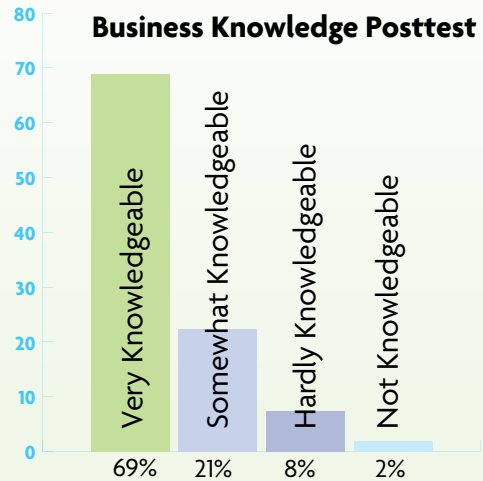
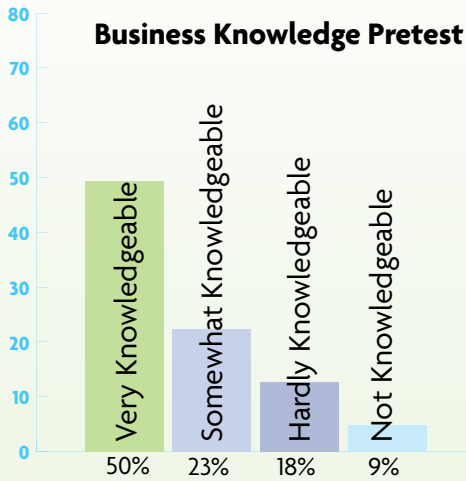
**Impact  
as of  
2023**

**24** businesses  
**GRADUATED FROM MASTER CLASS**

**12** businesses awarded  
**APPLE ACCREDITATION**

By this time next year, **12 more businesses** will have completed Master Class and received accreditation.

## Cohort 2: Jan- April 2023



- 100% of participants expect to increase their revenue as a result of BLI.

- 93% of participants expect to increase their enrollment as a result of BLI.

- 93% of participants expect to increase their hiring as a result of BLI.

### What are they saying?

“I was about to close my business and because of this program, I know I am capable.”

“If I had not attended this class I would have never attempted to advocate.”

“We have started networking within our local community. We also started a better onboarding and training program for our employees. We are in the process of creating a website.”

“I ALWAYS think about BLI and what I learned. I appreciate that the team invested so much in us and that we have peers in the community that we can lean on through this work. I look forward to continuing to grow our organization with what I learned.”

“I am in the process of getting my accreditation with FACCAM, thanks to the BLI. I have made improvements in goals and plans to achieve them. It was a wonderful opportunity, and I am very grateful.”

## Cohort 1: Jan -April 2022

With individuals leaving the childcare profession at astonishing rates, we asked alumni if they remained in the field. 100% of Alachua County alumni reported that they were still working in childcare and 100% reported that they were open for business.

Have you been able to increase your salary since participating in the BLI?



Have you increased enrollment since participating in the BLI?



Have you increased teacher salaries since participating in the BLI?



# EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

The Children's Trust wants to ensure children and families are supported and have the resources they need from the very beginning and throughout key milestones.



**NewboRN Home Visiting** is a free program offered to all Alachua County women who give birth in the county. Within a week

after baby is born, a registered nurse or midwife visits mom and baby at home to see how they are doing, share information and connect them to services and resources. A registered nurse or midwife will provide a physical and health assessment on baby and mom, help with breastfeeding and nutrition, show how to care for baby, share infant safety tips, discuss family planning options and connect families to local resources.



## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

### How Much?

Families with newborns offered	1550
Families completing home visit and assessment	625

### How Well?

Completion rate	60%
Satisfaction	100%

### Better Off?

Understanding of maternal health needs	100%
Understanding of infant health and development	100%
Understanding of infant safety	100%
Understanding of environmental safety education	100%

FY2023 expenditures: \$247,758

## Transformative Professional Development

The **Transformative Professional Development (TPD)**

**initiative** focuses on increasing access to high-quality early care and education service for children birth to age 5 in Alachua County. TPD professional development supports include:

- Knowledge and skill development through provider workshops
- Job-embedded Practice-Based Coaching (PBC) to help providers to learn how to use effective teaching practices in the classroom to support child development and learning.

Through the collaborative efforts of the University of Florida Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies and the Early Learning Coalition of Alachua County, the TPD initiative has established a sustainable, evidence-based professional development system for early care and education providers.

FY2023 expenditures: \$112,162

## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

### How Much?

Teachers	36
Childcare centers represented	23
Children in represented classrooms	202

Note: Based on contract ending June 30, 2023

### How Well?

Completion rate	83%
Satisfaction	100%

### Better Off?

Quality improvement*	94%
Increased formal coaching observation**	82%

\*As measured by pre/post scores on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

\*\*As measured by pre/post Strengths and Needs assessments.





On the Way was a three-year community innovation grant awarded to the Children’s Trust of Alachua County by **The Pritzker Children’s Initiative** (PCI) to develop a local plan to collaboratively expand prenatal-to-age 3 services with a focus on equity and family leadership. Our Alachua County partners in this effort included: Department of Health (WIC office), WellFlorida Council (Healthy Start), and the Early Learning Coalition. The objectives and progress on our local initiative are outlined below.

10,808 children ages 0-3 in Alachua County

Data Source: Florida Health Charts – Birth Count Query System (2017-2020)

## Progress to Date

On The Way Objectives:		Baseline 2020	2021	2022	2023
 <p><b>Maternal Infant Health</b></p>	Increase # of families (prenatal through age 3) receiving coordinated intake and referral via Connect.	1,666	1,766	1,876	1,983*
	Increase # of families (prenatal through age 3) participating in home visiting programs.	1,227	1,525	1,623	1,213*
	Increase # of families participating in NewboRN.	275	506	695	527*
	Increase # of children ages 0-3 actively participating in WIC.	2,283	2,559	2,575	2,501*
 <p><b>Early Care &amp; Education</b></p>	Increase # of children 0-3 receiving subsidies in classrooms receiving Practice Based Coaching Services.	46	66	202	103*
	Increase # of children 0-3 receiving subsidies in quality early learning classrooms as measured by a minimum score of 4.5 on the CLASS assessment.	114	188	11	Pending
	Increase # of children 0-3 receiving subsidies in high quality child care rated as “Gold Seal.”	17	41	15	Pending

\*Numbers are preliminary and will be finalized in January 2024.

## Mini Grants Children’s Trust Community Doula Project

Through a collaboration with Healthy Start, the first cohort of Alachua County Community Doulas was trained using the GROW Doula curriculum in September 2023. This curriculum has been adopted by the state Healthy Start office and will enable participants to not only be independent businesses but also to sub-contract with Healthy Start to deliver Doula services to Healthy Start clients. Seventeen Alachua County residents participated in cohort 1. The Children’s Trust will continue to support the new GROW Doulas cohort 1 growth by funding Mentor support.

To supplement the GROW Doula training, the Children’s Trust of Alachua County contracted with a company called **BEAM Birth Network** who hosted additional trainings for GROW Doula cohort 1 participants.



**FY2023 Expenditures  
(Community Doula): \$15,979**

# ENRICHMENT OVERVIEW

**Enrichment activities** provide specialty programming for students enrolled in after-school or summer programs. It enhances the students' social, cultural and educational experiences.

## The Child Advocacy Center

utilizes the “Not a Number” curriculum developed by Love 146, a human trafficking organization that is working to eradicate human trafficking through education, awareness and advocacy work. The program can be tailored to meet the needs of the children being served, utilizing interactive and structured activities, media and discussion to facilitate learning.



### Success story:

Youth self-esteem has increased along with the understanding that some problematic behaviors are survival skills or a result of trauma. Several girls have recently requested one-on-one conversation to ask additional questions, process an event they have experienced, or express appreciation for the program.

One teenage girl shared how she felt worthless, bad and like a failure, linking herself to a family history of substance abuse, incarceration and violence. By engaging in the curriculum, she has shifted her mindset and recognizes she is a survivor of abuse and survived the best way she could. This teen now has a plan for her future, including getting her GED, going to college, and working with at-risk youth. With the knowledge and empowerment she received from the program, she is eager to make better choices and make a difference in her community.

**FY2023 expenditures: \$11,172**



**Motiv8U** introduces youth to interactive, engaging, curriculum-based training that deals with social-emotional components of youth development. The program teaches youth to effectively process emotions, resolve conflict, build successful relationships and more.

A core message, U\*R IMPT (You Are Important), equips participants to recognize and take ownership of their personal value and worth.

### Success story:

The A. Quinn Jones Center, an alternative behavioral school with students of diverse backgrounds, utilized the programming of Motiv8U. At first, students were reluctant to feel confident and welcomed in each session. But it didn't take long for them to leave the sessions and hurry to tell their peers and teachers about the things they learned and experienced. Thanks again, Motiv8U, for helping restore hope in the lives of youth.

**FY2023 expenditures: \$47,025**



**CE's Underground Kitchen** provides culinary training and education to partnering programs for youth. Weekly cooking sessions focus on nutritional awareness, mentoring, life skill training and the importance of culturally comforting food. Nourishment fact sheets and meal prep guides further assist with summer

and after-school dietary needs. Underground Kitchen also provides discounted prepped meals to all partnering sites year-round to support healthy eating habits in low-income areas.

**FY2023 expenditures: \$70,566**

**The Florida Museum of Natural History** is dedicated to inspiring people to value the biological richness and cultural heritage of our diverse world and make a positive difference in its future. As an informal science provider, the museum reaches lifelong learners outside the traditional school format and time. And as an institution dedicated to the future, the best way to do so is working with youth.

**Success story:**

Science Surprises provides students with consistent programming throughout the school year. One participant has always stood out to us: This student struggles in the classroom, is high-energy and can sometimes frustrate others with his antics. We recognized this in the first program he attended, and immediately brainstormed ways to keep him occupied and engaged while still delivering the program as we developed it. Over the course of a few sessions, we watched him blossom as he described his love for science and enthusiasm for hands-on activities. He now enthusiastically participates in every part of the program.

**FY2023 expenditures: \$23,460**



Florida Museum



**The Cultural Arts Coalition Science Club Program**

is designed to academically supplement elementary school students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) areas by offering exposure in ways that directly impact students' lives. These offerings help ensure children from low socio-economic and minority communities are competitive, stimulated and engaged. The program enhances students' creative and critical thinking, ultimately enabling success in their future academic and work careers.

**FY2023 expenditures: \$13,592**



Cultural Arts Coalition

# FINANCIAL REPORT

ALL FUNDS*		
REVENUE	FY 2023 BUDGET	FY2023 ACTUAL**
Property Taxes	\$8,858,643.00	\$8,461,657.37
Misc. Revenue	\$5,000.00	\$755,304.51
Other Sources	\$5,572,300.00	\$1,096,834.00
Total Revenue	\$14,435,943.00	\$10,313,795.88
EXPENSES	FY 2023 BUDGET	FY2023 ACTUAL**
Program services/support	\$9,802,608.00	\$6,522,824.96
General Administration	\$1,628,098.00	\$1,297,534.30
Capital Outlay	\$3,005,237.00	\$1,055,237.00
Total Expenditures	\$14,435,943.00	\$8,875,596.26

\*Current as of 12/20/2023

\*\*Unaudited Amounts



Hawthorne Mayor Jacquelyn Randall and her daughter at the Nature Day event.



100 Black Men Aviation Academy



UF Homecoming parade



Nature Day event, Hawthorne



## CHILDREN'S TRUST TEAM

**Seated (L-R):** Diana Sanchez, Kristy Goldwire, Marsha Kiner, Belita James, Mia Jones  
**Standing (L-R):** Deon Carruthers, Nicole Odom, Demetrica Tyson, Kirsten Rabin, Bonnie Wagner, Elizabeth Cayson, Ashley Morgan-Daniel, Thomas Hill. **Not pictured:** Tara Major.

# OUR PROVIDERS

**Alachua County Board of Commissioners**

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay**

**Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida**

**Business and Leadership Institute for Early Learning**

**Cade Museum for Creativity**

**Catholic Charities**

**Child Advocacy Center**

**Children's Home Society of Florida**

**City of Alachua**

**City of Gainesville**

**Community Impact Corporation**

**Cultural Arts Coalition**

**Deeper Purpose Community Church**

**Early Learning Coalition of Alachua County**

**Episcopal Children's Services**

**FL Institute of Workforce Innovation**

**Gainesville Area Community Tennis Association, Inc.**

**DBA Aces in Motion**

**Gainesville Bridge, Inc. DBA Peak Literacy**

**Gainesville Circus Center**

**Gainesville Thrives**

**Genesis Family Enrichment Center**

**Girls Place, Inc.**

**Good News Arts**

**Goodwill Industries of North Florida**

**Greater Bethel**

**Greater Duval Neighborhood Association**

**Healthy Start of North Central Florida**

**I AM STEM**

**Just For Us Education**

**Kids Count in Alachua County**

**Minority Business Listings**

**Motiv8U of North Central Florida**

**New Technology Made Simple Now**

**North Central Florida YMCA**

**Pace Center for Girls**

**Partnership for Strong Families**

**Peaceful Paths**

**Santa Fe College Foundation**

**St. Barbara CFC Ministries**

**Star Center Children's Theatre**

**Traveling Art Camp**

**UF Health**

**Underground Kitchen**

**University of Florida College Reach Out Program (CROP)**

**UF College of Dentistry Saving Smiles**

**UF Freedom School**

**UF Health – PALS (Shands)**

**UF Museum of Natural History**



**CHILDREN'S TRUST**  
OF ALACHUA COUNTY

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