

# How are the CHILDREN?

A newsletter of the  
New Hampshire  
Children's Trust Fund,  
reporting on our efforts  
in "keeping children safe  
and families strong"  
in New Hampshire.

SPRING 2001

The name of our newsletter, *How Are the Children?*, is a reference to an African tradition, where a visitor to a new village inquires about the status of the children. The NHCTF promotes the idea that the well-being of children is the standard by which every community should be measured.

## From the Chair:



The work of the New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund is an ever-evolving story, and like any really *good* story it has personal, political, and social dimensions. Over the past few years we have grown in many areas, all of which have supported our essential mission: To keep children safe, and families strong.

This issue of *How are the children?* is a synopsis of how far we have come, and also how far we need to go to meet current and emerging challenges. We thank you for your support that has brought us so far, and hope you will continue to support our work in new ways as we move forward.

**Research.** An article on page 3 presents a synopsis of a research project we are supporting to measure the impact of parent education programs in New Hampshire. The preliminary results reported here validate the *importance* of the programs we fund to help all parents get the support they need to raise healthy children. The final results of this research will help guide us in our future activities.

**Financial Strength.** We are also pleased to provide you with a summary of our financial activity for FY 2000 (see page 5). I hope you find our growth and development as exciting as we do on the Board and staff.

**Endowment Building.** To fully actualize the New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund's mission, we must build our endowment to ensure consistent funding to essential programs over time – no matter what gyrations the United States economy may be experiencing. We have made significant progress in this area, but much more work needs to be done.

**Increased Business Support.** We have been particularly inspired by our new support from businesses over the past year. Business owners are beginning to understand that investing in the New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund means investing in families, strengthening community and, in turn, the local economy. We look forward to establishing new partnerships with concerned businesses in the year ahead.

**New Giving Opportunity.** I am pleased to announce a new giving opportunity designed to honor the role that all nurturing adults – mothers, fathers, grandparents, godparents, teachers, neighbors, friends – have played in *our* lives, and in the lives of children. I encourage you to honor a person you know who has positively impacted your life, the life of your children or grandchildren, or the life of children in the community, by making a contribution to the New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund in his or her honor. (See the enclosed flyer for details)

**Thank you.** All of us at the New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund "thank you" for your support. Approximately 20,700 children and families participated in the supportive, educational, and networking programs that your gifts have made possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lucy Fowlkes Breed".

Lucy Fowlkes Breed

Chair, New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund

## So, how are the children? April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month



*As a nation, we have yet to establish even the most general policy against child abuse and neglect.*

— Lisa Brennan

**F**or me, this is an important time to step back from the day-to-day demands of my work and think about where we are, as a nation, a state, and as a small – and passionately committed nonprofit – in understanding the very complex issue of child abuse and neglect. It is a time when I find it helpful to ask *myself* “So, how are the children?” This year, I’ve chosen to share some of my thoughts with you here.

As a nation, according to the former Commissioner of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, in a report released in April 2000, the national average of reports of child abuse and neglect have been declining slowly over the last four years.

However, in New Hampshire, reports and investigations of child abuse and neglect *rose* by fifteen percent in the last year. In real numbers, that means that reports of child abuse and neglect increased from 1,200 to 1,400 and, investigations into suspected cases rose from 6,000 to 7,000 from 1999 to 2000. In 2000, **four** children died as a result of abuse or neglect. Three of those deaths are still under investigation. This is an unprecedented number of child deaths for New Hampshire.

### **The extraordinary complexities...**

Ending the physical, psychological and sexual abuse of children is an extraordinarily complex social challenge. While we all agree – in principle – abuse of children is ‘wrong,’ we have a long way to go before we can come to a general consensus of what abuse really is.

This is an issue that ultimately embraces *everything* we are as a community: economics, education, politics, our religious/spiritual beliefs, our personal family histories... all these things impact what we see as abuse, and what we *don't* see.

Think about this next time you are at the supermarket or the mall on a busy Saturday. How many times do you see a toddler spanked for reaching out and ‘touching’ something?

Admittedly I’m a bit sensitized to the issue, but I witness the psychological and/or physical abuse of children all around me, all the time! Do you? Do we see the same thing?

I’m not sure we always do, but I feel strongly that we have to be able to talk about it.

### **Are we ready for a national discussion?**

As a nation, we have *yet* to establish even the most general policy against child abuse and neglect. Even with all the data that’s been collected on this issue in the past 25 years, and volumes of authoritative studies published since the 1950s, pronouncing the costly, long-term impact of child abuse on our society. It is clear that at a national level, we are not willing to deal decisively with this political ‘hot potato.’

One reason may be that the legal ramifications of *reporting* child abuse and neglect across the country are inconsistent, increasingly complex, and burdensome. In New Hampshire, they may become even *more so* during the upcoming legislative since the introduction of House Bill 686 which allows the names of individuals who make reports of suspected child abuse and neglect a matter of public record.

### **What I would like to know...**

Perhaps the public debate has been tabled because we don’t know where our elected officials stand on the issue.

I would like to see a question about the corporal punishment of children positioned right alongside the standard ‘controversial’ questions presented to those running for local, state, and national office:

I would like to know, right along with a candidate’s stand on ‘campaign finance reform,’ ‘affordable prescription drugs,’ and a women’ right to choose,’ whether he or she thinks it is OK to hit one’s children.

### **Why this discussion is so important**

At a minimum, the acceptability of corporal punishment of children must become a more *public* discussion. Family resource centers across the state can play a critical role by convening these community-wide discussions in a safe, controlled way. If we don’t at least have the discussion – in our homes and in our communities – the deeply rooted myths about the effectiveness of corporal punishment are perpetuated, and the cycle of violence against children will continue unchecked... and unquestioned.



A broad, public discussion will be challenging, as it calls into question our personal values. What do you see as abusive? What do I see as abusive? What stereotypes are operating? What do abusive adults “look like?” What is the role of government in protecting the rights of children and the individual freedoms of parents?

I don’t have the answers to these questions, but I do know that beginning an honest discussion is the start of creating positive change. And, there is evidence that positive change is occurring in New Hampshire.

**Lessons from recent history**

I’d like to suggest that the *increase* in reported child abuse and neglect in New Hampshire may actually reflect something *positive* about our public education and family support efforts over the past several years.

The increase in child abuse and neglect reports may reflect an increase in the general level of responsibility adults are taking for children in their communities.

If we look to the women’s movement of the 1960s and 1970s as a guide, we might learn some important lessons about how to interpret the ‘data.’

The growth of general public awareness about the incidence of rape and violence against women over the past 25 years was closely linked to community-based education and victim support efforts. The development of public education programs, rape crisis centers, “safe houses,” and police education programs, made it easier for women to report rape, and *also* deal with the “system” once that report was made.

In communities where these support services existed, the reported “incidence” of rape often increased, in the short term,

simply because the victims had the support they needed to move forward, with less shame and humiliation.

Violence against children, like violence against women in the 1960s and 1970s, is extremely difficult for our current legal system to litigate. Perhaps the child abuse prevention movement needs to look more closely at the domestic violence movement’s history and work even more intentionally with the legal, medical and criminal justice communities.

On all levels, much work needs to be done. But like all *effective* social transformations, I know that change begins close to home.

**What all of us can do... today.**

Let’s set aside the whole issue of ‘child abuse and neglect’ for a moment, and consider the role we play in the lives of children. Think about the children in your life – whether these children are your direct responsibility, your relatives, your neighbors, the kids you see at the playground, or just “hanging out” in your community.

How can we become more meaningfully involved in their lives?

A friend and colleague of mine sets aside every Friday morning for “Adventure Time!” with the children in her life. They tie balloons to wagons and parade to the park. They dress up in colorful play-clothes and tell silly stories. Another friend writes short notes to his six nieces and nephews every month. Another friend tells me she simply makes a point of saying hello and talking to the kids she sees as a postal worker walking around town.

The challenge for each of us is simply to see... make room... engage... and take responsibility for the children who touch our lives.

These seemingly small actions will do more to create positive change than any policy debate I can think of. So, this year, let’s launch a “public campaign” that challenges *all* adults to become more intentionally and more meaningfully involved in the lives of our children.

Sincerely,

Lisa A. Brennan

*Parent Education Programs: Do they really help?*

**NHCTF-Sponsored Study Validates Prevention**

The New Hampshire Children’s Trust Fund has a very clear mission: “To keep children safe and families strong.”

But the effectiveness of our work to prevent child abuse *before* it happens, and support families *before* there is a problem, has been difficult to quantify. New, New Hampshire-based research promises to validate the importance of our work in several critical areas.

**Do parent education programs have an impact in New Hampshire?**

National research has long suggested that parent education and support programs impact families in very positive ways. These studies have told us that participation in parent education programs *often* results in more confident and capable parents and healthier, more successful children. With the amount of funding awarded to parent education programs by the NHCTF doubling since 1998, we wanted to be absolutely sure that our funding was making a difference New Hampshire.

We now know that similar positive outcomes are possible. With support from the **New Hampshire Charitable Foundation** and the **University of New Hampshire**, we have conducted a study that measures the effectiveness of the parent education programs funded by our grantmaking program, and the preliminary results are promising.

**What we measured.**

The study evaluated four short-term (six to ten weeks in duration) parent education programs held at several Family Resource Centers throughout the state.

These programs were evaluated for their effectiveness in producing the following outcomes:

- Increased level of social support
- Increased level of confidence in the role of parent or caregiver
- Increased skills for managing children’s behaviors
- Increased levels of community involvement



**Research Team:** Sally Ward, Ph.D., Assistant Dean and Professor at the University of New Hampshire’s Department of Sociology, (center), consults with Brigid Murray, designer of the evaluation project (left) and Susan Engel, Ph.D. candidate and researcher (right) at an early morning breakfast meeting.

**What we have learned.**

Preliminary results enable us to confidently draw some initial conclusions. Initial review of data strongly suggests that parents who have attended parenting education programs report higher levels of confidence in their parenting skills. Also, parents who participate in these programs report higher levels of social support than those who do not.

Increased parenting confidence and strong social supports are primary factors in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

**The challenge**

Preliminary review of the data also presents some challenges, both for organizations like the New Hampshire Children’s Trust Fund, as well as our elected officials and public policy leaders. Two of these challenges are summarized here.

First, data strongly suggests that parent education programs must be part of a more comprehensive prevention strategy, or their impact is minimized. Second, the continued widespread use of corporal punishment as an acceptable parenting practice limits the effectiveness of parent education programs, and discussion of this issue must be made a public policy priority.

The complete study will be released in September. For more details, and/or to ensure you receive a copy, contact the NHCTF office at 603-224-1279.

**Anger Can *Positively* Fuel Action!**

Newspaper headlines can infuriate Ellie Porter, a New Hampshire Children’s Trust Fund Board Member:

*Man Pleads Innocent to Infant Girl’s Death.*

*Mom’s Boyfriend Accused of Raping Six Year Old.*

At one point in her life, it was headlines like this that also evoked painful personal memories, and left her feeling powerless.

**Getting Involved.** Porter serves as a member of the Board of Trustees of the New Hampshire Children’s Trust Fund. For this retired public relations executive, serving with the NHCTF has been a way to help prevent the tragic consequences of child abuse and neglect that she had witnessed in her own family.

**Involvement Inspired by Experience.**

Porter’s commitment to the New Hampshire Children’s Trust Fund involves more than her skills and counsel as a public relations professional. Her involvement is also personal.

Ellie witnessed the abuse of a child by a relative. The perpetrator of this abuse was the child’s mother – a well-educated professional women in her early forties, who had also read a great deal of the literature about early childhood development and parenting. Despite her education and reading, she was not at all prepared for the day-to-day realities of parenting a child.

**Need for Support Transcends ‘Class’.** Ellie knows that her abusive relative was struggling with her own changing identity – from a professional, working women, to “full-time” parent. She also understands that her relative didn’t have any awareness of the home visiting programs and other support systems available in her community to help her cope.

“The psychological, physical, and sexual abuse that takes place in families knows *no* class boundaries,” Ellie told us recently. “I know from personal experience that social class doesn’t protect children, although I also understand that those families *without* resources may be more vulnerable. It is essential that family resource centers become places where *all* parents and community members can turn for help and support.”

“Issues like stress, and postpartum depression know no socio-economic boundaries, and are experienced by so many women and families. The help I offered, while important, also left me feeling powerless. I *can* make a difference now,” she told us.

In addition to serving on the Board of the NHCTF, Ellie is a student at Harvard University’s *Institute for Learning in Retirement* program, and a consummate community activist.



Ellie Porter is not only a NHCTF Trustee. She is also a student, community activist, and devoted grandmother.

# Our Donors

The following individuals, families, and businesses made contributions to the New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund in FY 2000.

If you, your family, your business, religious organization, or civic group would like to learn more about how you can help to keep children safe, and families strong, please contact Lisa Brennan at (603) 224-1279.

## Memory Gifts

- Representative Rebecca Crosby Hutchinson, in memory of Jean Crosby
- Diane D'Amato, in memory of Morgan
- John P. Rogers, in memory of Edith B. Rogers
- Paul Spivack, in memory of Roland Turgeon

## Honor Gifts

- Sylvia and Robert Chamberlin, in honor of Family Resource Centers and Network New Hampshire
- Patricia Dowling, in honor of the Honorable Donna Sytek
- Carol Moore, in honor of Kids!

## Individual Gifts

- Maureen Barrows
- Pamela and John Blackford
- Suzanne and Philip Boulter
- Lucy Fowlkes and R. Huntington Breed
- Lisa Brennan
- Lynn and John Cuddy
- Janet and George Devito, Jr.
- Geraldine S. Donahue

- Margaret Donahue
  - Marguerite and Richard Edmunds
  - Pauline and Martin Feuerstein
  - Joseph Foster
  - Leo Fraser, Jr.
  - Barbara French
  - Dr. and Mrs. Gilbert Fuld
  - Rochelle Heit and Donald Salvatore
  - Godfrey Howard
  - Elizabeth and Harold Janeway
  - Judith Frank and John Ketterer
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  - Audrey Knight
  - Gerard Lavoie (The Lavoie Foundation)
  - Susan and John Lynch
  - Wesley and Christopher Maloney
  - Carol McCarthy
  - Nancy A. and William B. Morrison
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  - James Pilliod
  - Kara and Alan Popkin
  - Eleanor Porter
  - Irene Pratt and Susan Mooney
  - Nike and David Speltz
  - Mary Temke
  - Robert Wells
- ## Business Gifts
- Bow Mills Bank and Trust
  - Creative Telecom Solutions
  - Monadnock Paper Mills, Inc.
  - Paxton Communications
  - River Road Pediatrics
  - Ruedig Banzhoff Realty
  - United Way of King County

# Financial Summary

(FY 2000)

The following is a summary of income and expenses for FY 2000. The NHCTF is pleased to report that sixty percent of our operating budget is allocated to providing direct financial support to programs across the state of New Hampshire. The second largest expenditure is for public education efforts. Administration costs remain well within industry standards for quality nonprofit management.

## Income

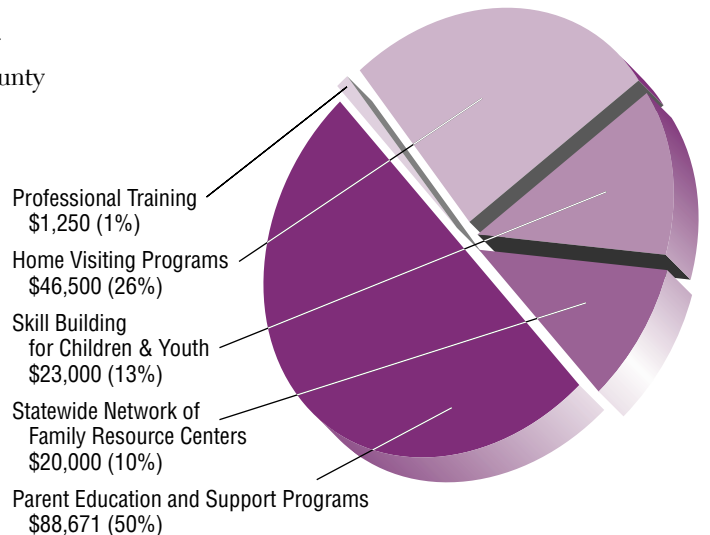
Dedicated funds carried over from FY '99	\$ 8,839
Corporate Donations	935
NHCTF Endowment	95,964
CBFRS Federal Funds	177,686
Foundations	5,000
Individual Donations	7,786
Interest Income	12,981
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 309,191</b>

## Expenses

Grantmaking	\$ 181,671
Network New Hampshire (additional administrative support)	15,838
Public Education	35,197
Program Evaluation	19,000
Resource Development	19,055
Administration	38,430
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 309,191</b>

## A closer look at grantmaking expenses

The chart at right illustrates the type of programs that received grant awards from the NHCTF in FY 2000. A total of \$181,671 was awarded to 31 community-based programs across the state.





The New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund (NHCTF) was created in 1986 by legislative statute RSA 169-C:39 to build a permanent endowment to support programs in New Hampshire that prevent child abuse and neglect.

In 1988, the State of New Hampshire allocated \$500,000 in public funds to match the same amount of privately raised dollars. The income generated from this growing endowment is dispersed annually to organizations that work to strengthen and support families. Since its inception, the NHCTF has awarded \$1,175,878 to community-based organizations statewide.

In addition to grantmaking, the NHCTF works to raise awareness about the causes of child abuse and the means by which it can be prevented through public awareness campaigns and informational forums. Finally, the NHCTF works to advance the family support movement and insure the highest quality of services to families through a statewide leadership coalition called *Network New Hampshire*.

**How to get involved.** If you are interested in learning more about the work of the New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund or want to explore your charitable giving options, please call Lisa Brennan, Executive Director, at (603) 224-1279.

**For information about applying for a grant.** Contact Kara Popkin, Administrative Assistant, at (603) 224-1279.

**The New Hampshire  
Children's Trust Fund**  
91-93 North State Street  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301  
Phone: (603) 224-1279 Fax: (603) 228-7676  
E-mail: nhctf@conknet.com

## Remember these dates!

**April 30, 2001:** NHCTF grant application deadline (applications must be received by 5:00 pm).

**May 7, 2001:** Meeting of the NHCTF Board of Trustees.

**May 9, 2001:** Legislative Breakfast to recognize the work of family resource centers in NH, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 21 Centre Street, Concord. Lew Feldstein, President, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, guest speaker.

**May 15, 2001:** Network New Hampshire Meeting. Riverbend Parent Child Center, 26 Pleasant Street, Concord. 9:30 am - 12:00.

**June 11, 2001:** Grantmaking day at the NHCTF.

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***How Are the Children?*** is a publication of the New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund, and is mailed free of charge to supporters and friends. Please contact us if you know someone who would like to be on our mailing list.

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