No one does what Let It Be Us does. They are game-changers for children in foster. They care and those awaiting adoption.”

— CAROLINE OSTERHEUS
Adoptive Parent
Let It Be Us is a rare Illinois child welfare nonprofit focused on securing adoption and permanency for our children who are patiently waiting. We were formed in December of 2014 and as we just began our 5th year of work, I can tell you that 2018 was an exciting year! Our work is unprecedented because, literally, no one does what we do. In these fast paced years, we have changed the outcomes of countless numbers of our children’s lives and we have introduced a new landscape for foster care and adoption in Illinois that is full of potential.

In this Annual Report, you’ll see stunning statistics, read quotes from parents who have filled their homes with children through foster care and adoption, and learn about the ways that we have helped our most vulnerable population of children in Illinois. Your donations have paved the way for all of our work to be achieved and, as always, your donations and your support mean the world to us and to the children we serve. Thank you for investing in the lives of all of our children.

You can always reach me at susanmcconnell@letitbeus.org or 847-764-5428.

Susan McConnell
Founder and Executive Director
This program is used to aid in finding foster/adoptive parents for children in emergent need or who are challenging to place. We offer a customized solution for each child referred to us, creating a new database of parent resources for each child. We reach thousands of licensed and waiting parents in our aggregated and growing network.

Using social media strategies, a subscription-based blog, and our registry of over 900 waiting families, our experienced recruitment team finds homes for these children who, without us, would have no one.

In the 2018 Targeted Recruitment Program:

- We placed **68 children** in safe and loving homes, the majority of whom were headed for a shelter.
- We worked with **62 different caseworkers**.
- We recruited and submitted **340 licensed and waiting homes**.
- **100% of the time**, we were able to find licensed parents in a geographic area with certain parameters.
- **80% of the time**, the children were matched with our parents.
We curate and manage the state’s only gallery of photos and stories of children awaiting adoption, which lives on our website. It’s the number one page viewed on our website and we are significantly increasing these children’s chances of adoption.

In 2018 we had 103,000 hits on our website and 757,000 page views.

When we built the Heart Gallery in 2016, it was home to only 10 waiting children. Today, it is working for 60 children, and that number is growing.

“This organization has helped many children find permanency in their lives. My family learned about a child on Tuesday. We met the child on Thursday and started the transition process shortly after. If it wasn’t for them, my new son would be living in a shelter. We are so grateful for Let It Be Us.”

— Kyle Ellis
Adoptive parent
We host events which recruit foster and adoptive parents that are designed to solve the problem of Illinois simply not having enough homes for her waiting children.

In 2018, we hosted 8 of these events throughout Illinois with 900 parents registering for multiple events held throughout Illinois covering Chicago, Springfield, Champaign, Joliet, McHenry, Rockford, and Barrington. These events are the critical first step in licensing foster and adoptive parents so they may become families for our waiting children.

“Wonderful organization that increases community awareness about foster care and helps connect people to improve the child welfare system and outcomes.”

— AMBER RAKOCZY
Caseworker
We stock “Our Closet” in the Waukegan, Illinois DCFS office with everything a child coming into foster care needs: formula, diapers, fresh jammies, warm coats, and some healthy snacks to take the edge off the wait for a new home. All agencies in the Northern Region of Illinois are welcome to share in “Our Closet.”

Project Dignity bags are distributed to child welfare agencies across the State of Illinois.

“"This organization is changing the lives of children.”

— LESLIE CLAY
Social worker
Some Special Things That Happened in 2018

We provided special software for a boy in a group home struggling with autism so that he could better learn in school.

We found the perfect family for an LGBTQ teenage girl who now feels like she belongs and feels safe being herself.

We found the perfect home for a boy who is 15 and has never been given the attention he needs.

We found a single mother for a little baby who was abandoned at the hospital and was waiting for days because no one wanted her.

We provided a basic wardrobe for a 13 year old girl who came into foster care with only the clothes on her back. We also provided a new backpack with school supplies and a planner.

Important Facts from 2018

Over 6,500 followers on Facebook

Over 100,000 visitors to our website with over 757,000 page views

The premier foster and adoptive parent recruiters in Illinois

Over $300,000 value in volunteer hours
Founder and Executive Director
Susan McConnell

Board of Directors
Bob Noonan  
Board Chair  
Susan Stoga  
Vice Board Chair  
Kerry Miller  
Treasurer  
Nadiya Ali  
Events  
Rick Smith  
Finance  
Elizabeth Felice  
Mentorship  
Doug Locke  
Mentorship  
Kyle Ellis  
Parent Recruitment  
Brandon Verwijst  
Vice Treasurer  
Jennifer McAndrews, chair emeritus

Advisors
Rev. Thomas Burns  
Norma Machay  
Janet Ahern, ESQ  
Bob Lee  
Peter Yankala  
Samantha Crockett  
Alex Montgomery  
Beth Sherman, PsyD  
Bill Braithwaite, ESQ  
Ann Liston

Child Welfare Advocates
Wendy Noonan  
Amy Averbuch  
Ilana Forbes

“Amazing organization! They provide top-notch education about the industry and change the world for our children.”

— JENNIFER MARSH  
Adoptive parent and support group organizer

Let It Be Us
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Barrington, IL 60010

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LetItBeUs.org

Let it Be Us is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization under the US Internal Revenue Service Code and your donation is 100% deductible.

Let It Be Us recognizes, respects, promotes and celebrates the value of cultural diversity and will ensure that your ethnic or cultural customs, practices, and beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, disability, and/or community differences will be respected by agency staff.