



ANNUAL REPORT

2020

Let it Be Us
INSPIRING FOSTER CARE & ADOPTION



A Letter from Our Founder

2020 was a surprise for all of us, and I'm so proud that our team worked harder than ever to be nimble and innovative to produce an astounding year. With your support, Let It Be Us engaged and reached more foster and adoptive parents than ever before! You rose to the occasion with Let It Be Us and became one of US.

We produced 20 foster parent recruitment events on Zoom and entered 2021 as stronger digital recruitment leaders with skills that will last through the next decades. That is important because our charge, serving the most vulnerable children in foster care, will not diminish regardless of any landscape.

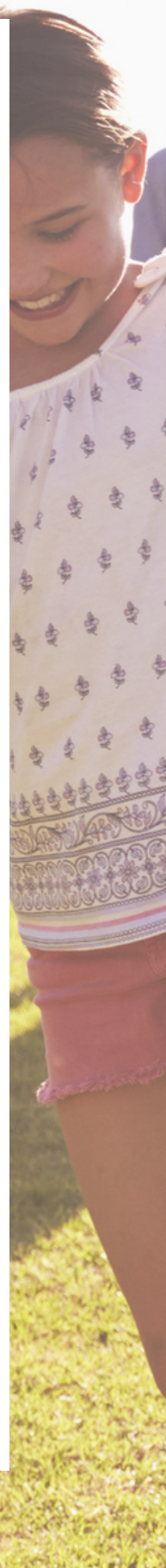
Sadly, the pandemic made the needs of these children surge along with sharp increases in unemployment and the never-seen-before tensions that accompany this unprecedented tumult.

We look forward to bringing new partners and parents to the forefront and securing life-changing placements for children. Reaching our goal of stopping the cycle of abandonment, abuse, and neglect is possible because of our donors and supporters. We're designing new models all the time and the future has never looked brighter. Please continue to care for yourselves, each other, and for children and thank you for becoming the US in Let It Be Us.

Susan A. McConnell | Executive Director and Founder
(847) 764-5428 | susanmcconnell@letitbeus.org

"2020 EMBOLDENED US AND WE LEARNED SKILLS THAT WILL LAST THROUGH THE NEXT DECADES. OUR CHARGE WILL NOT DIMINISH REGARDLESS OF ANY LANDSCAPE."

- Susan McConnell





Our Mission

Let It Be Us a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization, inspiring foster care and adoption in Illinois. As a licensed Illinois Child Welfare Agency, we recruit foster and adoptive parents and match them with Illinois children waiting for a family. Let It Be Us uses best practices in digital marketing and recruiting to reach more people to attract them to the world of foster care.

There are not enough licensed foster homes in Illinois, so children in the foster care system are sent to group homes, shelters, and hospital psychiatric wards. We aim to change this trajectory!

2020 Highlights

738

PEOPLE ATTENDED EVENTS TO
LEARN ABOUT FOSTER CARE

152

PEOPLE APPLIED TO BECOME
A LICENSED FOSTER HOME

171

CASE WORKER CALLS TO
HELP FIND A CHILD A HOME

248

CHILDREN PLACED IN
HOMES WITH OUR HELP

\$36,090 PROVIDED DIRECT SUPPORT TO CHILDREN IN NEED

**INCLUDING OVER 100 CHROMEBOOKS TO SUPPORT REMOTE LEARNING AND
OTHER VITAL SUPPORTS FOR CHILDREN AND FOSTER FAMILIES**



Lifecycle of our Work

Let It Be Us uses a human resources recruitment model to find foster parents and those interested in learning more about foster care. Focusing on customer service allows us to support, educate and coach parents through the foster care licensing process with partner agencies. We alleviate fears and normalize experiences.





Program Impact

OUTREACH

Program Mission: Educate and recruit new foster parents from across Illinois. We hosted 20 webinars from March - December.

LICENSING COACHING

Program Mission: Guide clients through the licensing process, and aim to push prospective foster parents through to get a license.

Outcomes: 223 parents coached, 82 parents in the process of getting licensed, and 66 parents licensed.

CHILD PLACEMENT SUPPORT

Program Mission: Help DCFS caseworkers and investigators quickly connect with licensed homes that are a good match for the children who need a home.

Outcomes: 248 children helped in 171 cases with 365 potential foster homes referred to agencies so children are placed with a foster home that fits their needs.

DIRECT SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

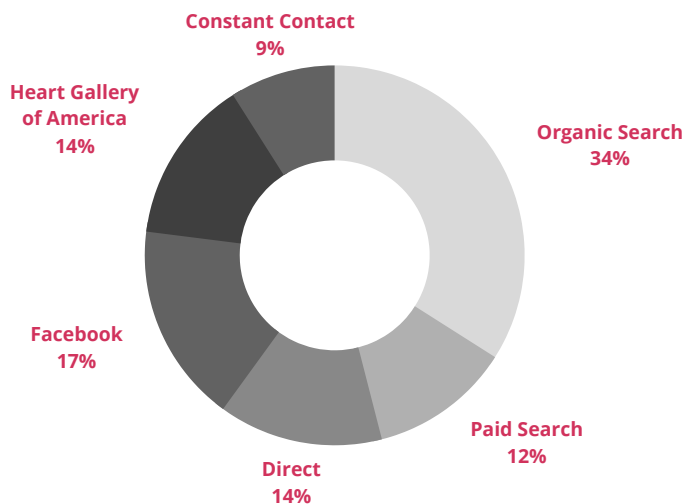
Program Mission: Provide financial and/or other types of support directly to children in care with an emphasis on filling needs that no other organization or entity is fulfilling. We aim for maximum impact on children in care

Chromebooks: \$20,625

Mentee support: \$13,230

Foster Family support: \$2,235

500 quality holiday gifts were given to the most needy children in foster care through the generosity of members and staff of the Hawthorn Woods Country Club.



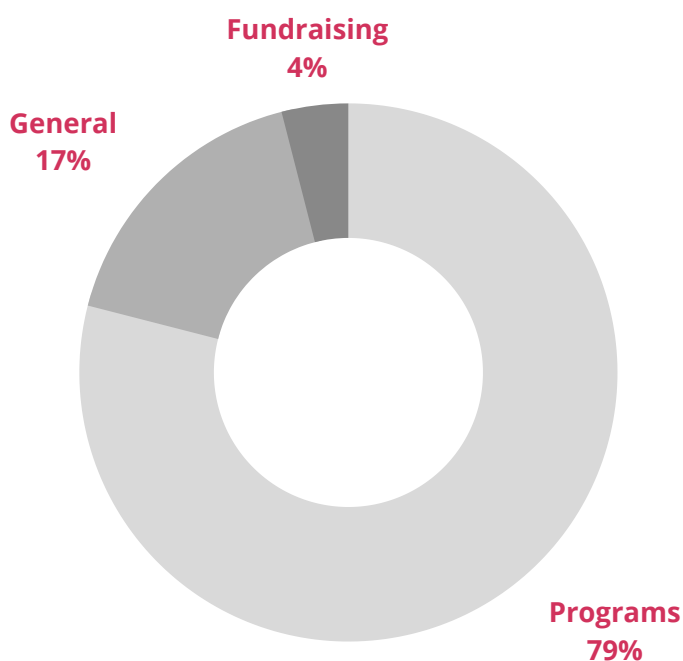


Success Stories

On a cold winter's night, a caseworker reached out to **Let It Be Us** to help find a home for an **8 year old girl** who was destined for a shelter. Our search included towns one hour around the specific town where the caseworker and girl were sitting in the caseworker's office. Within two hours, we found two appropriate homes for the girl, and she was spared from having to go to the shelter.

Let It Be Us worked with two parents, a current high school teacher and a retired high school teacher. They had raised 3 girls, now all grown and on their own. Their goal was to foster a girl struggling in high school. A caseworker asked for help with a girl, let's call her **Mary**, who was struggling in school and suffering because of the stress that school was causing her. This family welcomed Mary with open arms and worked over the summer to help her get caught up and ready to start a new chapter in her life.

2019 Financial Audit



Founder & Executive Director

Susan McConnell

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Director of Targeted Recruitment & Coaching

Morgan Diaz

Foster & Adoptive Parent Recruiter & Coach

Jodi Carlson

Foster & Adoptive Parent Recruiter & Coach

Lisa Hanson Braun

Director of Development &

Grants Administrator

Jeri Bark

Administrative Coordinator

Kate Himes

Marketing Coordinator

Diversity Policy

Let It Be Us is open and inclusive of all races, ethnicities, religions, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual identity. We serve all children and believe all deserve a loving home.



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Connect With Us



@LetItBeUs



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Let It Be Us

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