

COBBLED STREETS

# IMPACT STORY 2024

*Bringing positive childhood experiences and enriching opportunities to children in foster and kinship care.*

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# Why It Matters

At age 15, Marcus had already cycled through **SIX** foster homes. Each move meant leaving behind friendships, school connections, and any sense of stability—carrying only a few clothes, a toothbrush, and a stuffed animal from his childhood. Each move adds to his **trauma**, deepening old wounds while leaving new ones behind.

In each new home, he had to adapt to strangers' routines while **feeling like a trespasser in his own life**. Fear and uncertainty followed him daily. He felt as though he didn't matter.

By high school, Marcus had fallen behind academically, struggling with the weight of his past while facing an uncertain future. Without a consistent mentor or support system, he was at higher risk of **dropping out, homelessness, and involvement in the justice system**.

**Marcus's story is all too common.** Foster children endure deep emotional trauma from neglect and abuse in their birth families. That trauma is compounded by constant moves, unstable relationships, and a failing foster care system.



# Statistics

The statistics are staggering:

- **52%** of emancipating foster youth do not have a single enduring relationship in their life.
- Up to **80%** of children in foster care have significant mental health challenges.
- **70%** of Colorado's foster teens do not graduate from high school.
- **33%** of youth who leave the system in Colorado experience homelessness by their 21st birthday.
- The likelihood of early parenthood is **13 times higher** for young women aging out of foster care.



The child welfare system removes children from their birth families due to abuse or neglect, with **safety** as the top priority. When possible, the goal is to reunite children with their birth parents once it is safe and appropriate.

**The system is not, however, equipped to meet the social, emotional, mental, and physical needs of these kids.**

Without our intervention, children in foster care often miss out on the experiences that shape a healthy childhood. Team sports, music lessons, family trips, and a sense of community profoundly impact their well-being and future success.

## What We Do

Cobbled Streets provides positive childhood experiences and enriching opportunities for children in foster and kinship care.

These experiences transform a child by creating **healthy well-being, relationships, connections and community.**

These outcomes promote **belonging** and shape a strong **sense of self**, building the foundation for a more **promising future.**

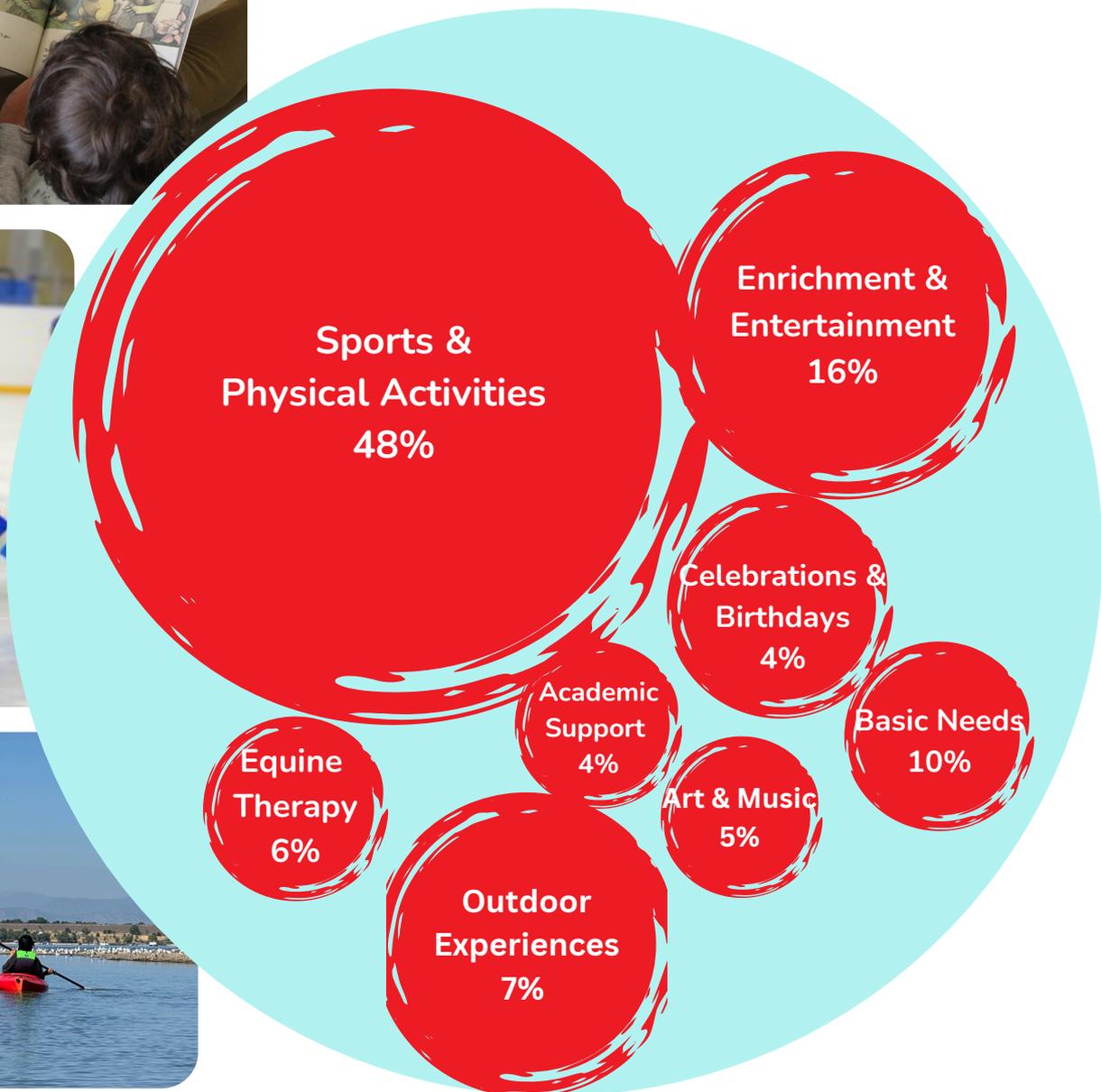


# The Numbers

- In 2024, we provided **3,199 experiences** for children in foster and kinship care through individualized experiences, group & partner events, and Ambassador Project monthly gatherings.
- **87%** of families shared they would not have been able to **access** the experience provided without Cobbled Streets' support.

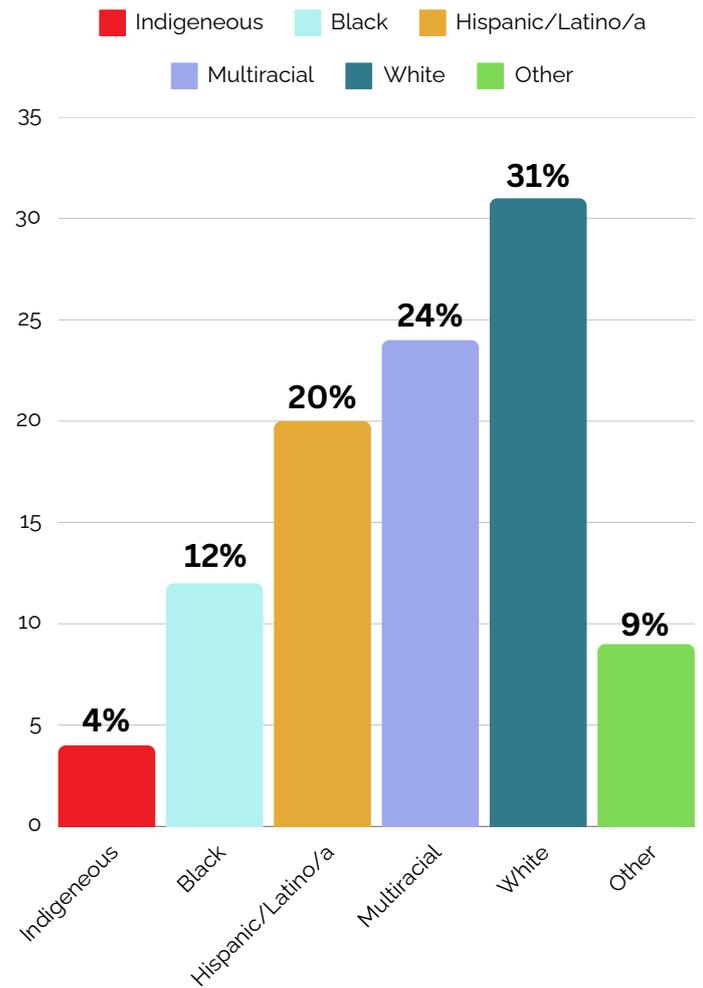


## Types of Experiences



# Our Youth & Families

- The families we serve have an average household size of **three** children. Among them, **35%** are in foster care, **32%** in kinship care, **12%** are adopted, **15%** are biological children, and **8%** have an unreported status.
- We serve a diverse population of youth, with **69%** identifying as Hispanic, Black, Multiracial, Indigenous, or other person of color.
- We serve children **ages 5 to 18**, with representation spread fairly evenly across all age levels.
- Among the youth we serve, **44%** are boys, **50%** are girls, and **6%** identify as nonbinary or prefer to self-describe.



\*\*Other includes Asian, Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander, and Other.

Our youth have an average of nearly **3 previous placements** and have attended an average of **3.5 different schools**



We serve the entire state of Colorado, although the majority of the families we serve reside in the **seven-county Denver Metropolitan Area.**

# WELL-BEING

Positive childhood experiences play a crucial role in a child's well-being by fostering a sense of safety, belonging, and self-worth. They help them develop social skills, coping mechanisms, and resilience, which serve as protective factors and buffers against the long-term effects of trauma and adversity.

## DATA

- In 2024, we provided **542 individualized, positive childhood experiences** for children in foster and kinship care.
- **99%** of youth reported having **fun** at the experience in which they engaged.



### What was your favorite part of the experience?

*"Being with friends"*

*"Exploring"*

*"Family and the cake and jumping"*



*"Seeing that I want to be a Monster Truck driver! It was a fun environment. We could be loud and silly. We got to have a fun family day. **It was the best day of my life!**"*

*"I like meeting new people and getting to cheer with the high school girls at the football games."*

*"Seeing a Broadway musical!"*

*"I like all the things and dancing is fun. We twirl and roll and make lots of noises with our shoes."*

*"Getting to make new friends"*

## WELL-BEING

Gymnastics is really helping him **build confidence**, strength, and courage! It's amazing to see him feel safe after being in fight-or-flight mode.



Everyone was so excited to go and they felt they were able to have a fun experience just like any average kid in an average family! Allowing them opportunities to feel like everyone else, and even special on top of that, makes me happy. **They deserve to feel important** and this experience gave them that.

It meant so much to him. He never expected to have such an amazing birthday party. He had so much fun and there was so much laughter. Providing this venue for his bday and his family to join was so positively impactful for all of them. It was **definitely memorable**.

The **smile** on his face was just worth it all.

Sara was able to attend her first Broncos game and was by far the **happiest kid there!**

It has been wonderful. Eric is able to start his day off with something he enjoys. Always has a big smile and **looks forward to going to swim**. He is such an active kid. It's just been great overall for him.

Cheer has had such a tremendous impact of Sara's life! We can't thank y'all enough!!! The cost was so much that without sponsorship we wouldn't have been able to give them this incredible opportunity.

Jessica's **world was opened up**. She got to see things in New York City that she never would without your help.

# RELATIONSHIPS

Research shows that being in supportive relationships is critical for children to develop into healthy, resilient adults.

## DATA

- We provided **68 family fun days**, which provide an opportunity for entire families to bond, create memories, and strengthen their relationships.
- **53%** of the individualized experiences we provide are **extended**, such as weekly tutoring, equine therapy, ice hockey league, or guitar lessons. They include an **ongoing, supportive relationship** with a tutor, coach, or teacher.



## RELATIONSHIPS



Me and Mario's biological sisters made an Oreo cake together for him. It was **so special**. We sang happy birthday in English and Spanish. There were so many smiles.

It has had a **huge impact on our relationship** showing him how important he is to us and how important it is that he has special experiences. It has shown him we are a safe place for him and that we care deeply about him. It has helped him open up and settle into his new environment.

It created a wonderful **bonding experience** for our whole family and allowed our foster girl to have an experience that she otherwise wouldn't have been able to have.

He just came into care so I think it proved to him that we will show how important his life is. It also **built trust** that we will continue to foster healthy relationships with bio family and we will make efforts on our end to ensure it happens.

It helped us **bond** by spending time together exploring a new place.

Having family days can be tough financially and logistically, and sometimes the dynamic between kids at home is tricky. Having fun days that I can bond with each person in a larger group is so fun. We took turns doing online voting for the truck show and it was a good chance to find things we had in common. Being in a group where kids have their bf/support/friend allows **chances to bond!**

# CONNECTION

Positive childhood experiences provide opportunities for children to connect with peers, family members, teachers, tutors, coaches, and more. This type of engagement provides a profound sense of security and belonging, nurturing self-esteem and resilience.

## DATA

- In 2024, we hosted **13 group & partner events**, serving **284 children**.
- Our partnerships are growing! In 2024, we partnered with Foster Source, Rylie's ARK, First Tee, Denver Broncos Foundation, ARK Ninja, the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, Fiske Planetarium, and more!





# CONNECTION

Anything you experience together **builds connection**. The connection with her community and family **builds good memories**.

This has been such an amazing outlet for Maya during these hard times. She looks forward to going to each practice and has built some **amazing connections**. This has made her so happy to have this outlet that her temperament at home has been much happier and helping her build healthy relationships.



I think the **camaraderie** and being part of this large group of people that are happy and having a good time is a feeling that is good for her. Letting loose and cheering and being happy is a great release of pent up stress. Having the permission to go loud is every kid's happy place.

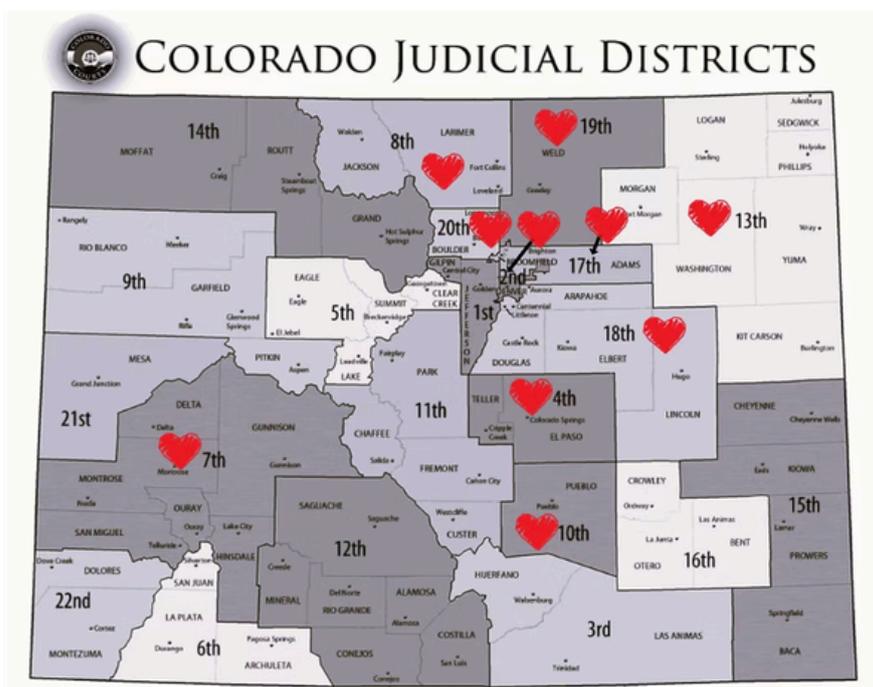


# COMMUNITY

Children need to feel they belong and that they are connected to the people and communities around them. The Ambassador Project is creating a network of supportive communities **outside the system**, empowering families and changing the landscape for all kids in foster care.

## DATA

- **100%** of the families we serve report they feel like part of **our community**.
- In 2024, **2,373** children attended monthly connection events through the Ambassador Project (duplicated count).
- The Ambassador Project is now active in **10** of Colorado's 23 Judicial Districts.
- Last year, Ambassadors held 11 monthly connection events in their districts for a total of **110 events!**





## COMMUNITY

During one of her last gym meets, two of her sponsors from Cobbled Streets came to watch and cheer for her. It meant so much for her to have this support and to see **multiple people in the stands cheering for her.**

The Ambassador Project is exactly what's been missing in the foster care system. The impact has been huge ... it has been **life-changing.** -Sarah Martin, Program Manager



I have witnessed families make **new connections** and bond over parenting children who have similar diagnoses and behaviors. Sometimes all we need as foster and kinship parents is **to be heard** by someone who is going through the same things. The Ambassador Project is making an impact on these families. They are so appreciative of being seen and loved on through the events we throw and the **relationships** we are fostering every month. -Jody Fountain, Denver Ambassador

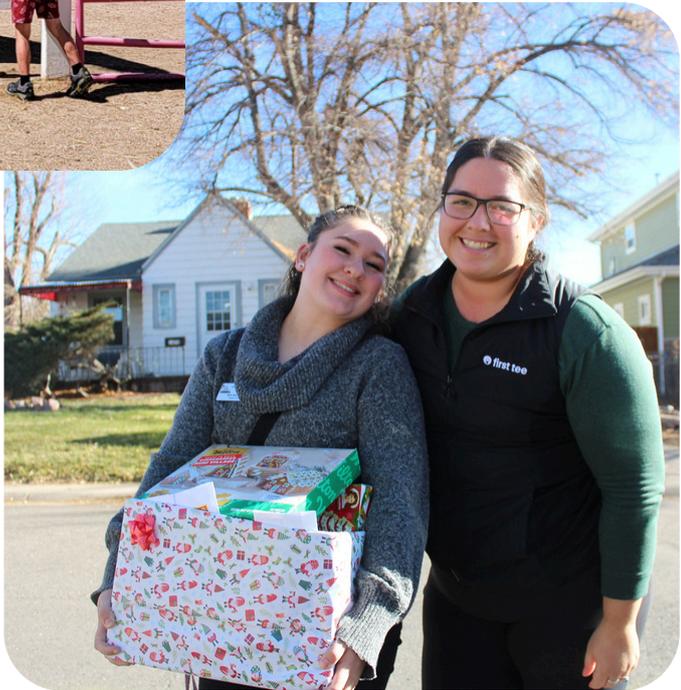


Fiske Planetarium, University of Colorado Boulder



# Get Involved

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE!



**To get involved, contact:**

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