

A Blueprint for Impact: Living Our Values



children's home & aid

OUR HISTORY AND OUR FUTURE. Children's Home & Aid helped create what is known as the modern public child welfare system. This system established, in part, foster care as the modern remedy for children whose families of origin could not safely care for and nurture them. Over the decades since our founding, tens of thousands of children—when it was deemed their parents could not care for them—found homes directly due to the efforts of Children's Home & Aid.

We believe the most important asset for child and youth well-being is the family.

We have shaped—for the better—the lives of many children and families over the span of 138 years with an unyielding

commitment to serving the most vulnerable among us. Yet we also understand that there is a material difference between our founder's assertion that, "there is a home in a good family for every homeless child and woe to me if I do not find it," and our contemporary aspiration to see every child, every family and every community thriving.

Our aspiration for children and families to thrive leads us to one inescapable conclusion: we must end the need for foster care as we know it. What was once a modern remedy is no longer the right solution.

Foster care has not and will not tackle the root causes that require foster care as a response: economic insecurity, mental health challenges and substance abuse.

We have not and will not foster care our way out of neglect and abuse.

We will replace what we currently think of as child welfare services with what we know to be child, family and community well-being solutions.

We believe racial and social equity is foundational.

We have not and will not foster care our way to thriving children and families.

The foster care system has disproportionately impacted families of color—transforming solvable challenges faced by families into life-altering crises from which too few emerge better off than when they entered.

We are not eliminating, we are transforming. We will replace what we currently think of as child welfare services with what we know to be child, family and community well-being solutions.

We believe discrimination in all forms influences perceptions of families' strengths and abilities which can lead to actions and interventions ultimately harmful to child and youth well-being.

Children's Home & Aid is uniquely poised to end this contemporary threat to child well-being that we helped create. We have a history of pushing boundaries, transforming systems and improving practice.

This is a part of our DNA. We innovate through intentional collaboration. We adopt research-based solutions and strive to develop new, collaborative approaches that respond to the needs of the children, youth and families we serve. Our contribution to the 138-year legacy of Children's Home & Aid is to design a more effective way of changing life trajectories that can guide our work for the next century.

We are defining this aspiration with a renewed focus and informed solutions and actions grounded in the following core beliefs which we will embrace as individuals, as communities of practice and as an organization.

Our core beliefs

We believe racial and social equity is foundational.

We believe poverty and scarcity remain existential threats to child well-being.

We believe human potential is evenly distributed but opportunity is not.

We believe that social capital, economic mobility and other outcomes vital for children and youth to thrive should not be predicted by race or zip code.

We believe historic, institutionalized racism is a significant contributor to differences in opportunity that disproportionately limit people of color.

We believe discrimination in all forms influences perceptions of families' strengths and abilities which can lead to actions and interventions ultimately harmful to child and youth well-being.

We believe the most important asset for child and youth well-being is the family.

We believe thriving families and communities are part of a larger system of social supports which must be just, equitable and accessible.

We believe our first duty is to the children and families we serve, and we will champion the needs of families with our funding partners.

Our committed actions

We will lead and advocate for robust policies and social supports which are antiracist, equitable and directed at creating social capital, economic mobility and systems designed to insure thriving children, families and communities.

We will confront our shortcomings and surface new, more effective ways to solve complex and intractable social problems by listening to others.

We will be transparent in our honest and continuous examination of our work and impact as we work to achieve this bold vision.

We commit to challenging each other, our peers, colleagues, and community partners to address discrimination and creating an anti-racist, anti-discriminatory environment in our workspace and in the community.

We will form effective partnerships with children, youth and their families based on the conviction that we are teachers, mentors, coaches, and advocates rather than judge, savior, or fixer.

We will serve as an effective partner for families because we believe families understand what they need and our most important role is to listen and respond.

Our solutions will include supports which are family centric and as diverse as our families to ensure we offer solutions to meet individualized needs.

We will intentionally engage, collaborate and execute solutions at the community level.

We will ensure our solutions are grounded in rigorous research demonstrating the desired impact, but will also innovate, test, prototype and scale new approaches as our learning from families evolves and grows.