

“The future is not a gift;
it is an achievement.”

– ROBERT F. KENNEDY





“Every generation helps make its own future.
This is the essential challenge of the present.”

– ROBERT F. KENNEDY

Robert F. Kennedy’s Legacy

Robert F. Kennedy believed that society bears a responsibility to care for its members who have no voice. At a time when our nation struggled with epic conflicts, he never wavered in advancing his vision of a better world for the disenfranchised. With eloquence, energy, and zeal, he reached out to people in need while challenging the more fortunate to do the same.

Since 1969, the Robert F. Kennedy Children’s Action Corps has responded to R.F.K.’s call to action by working tirelessly to improve the lives of children and families. The young people we serve are challenged by a variety of emotional, psychological, biological, environmental, and social issues. Regardless of the obstacles they face, the RFK Children’s Action Corps is committed to providing them with the opportunity to heal, learn, grow, and reach for a healthy, happy future.

To Our Friends and Supporters:

The Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps strives to empower young people with the confidence, skills, and support they need to take responsibility for their own futures. As we enter our 40th year of service, we are also committed to shaping a promising future for our agency by continuing to develop innovative programs that strengthen our continuum of care and by working to build a stronger national platform for child advocacy.

One of the ways we're addressing those goals is through a partnership with the RFK Center for Justice and Human Rights, an international organization dedicated to supporting and implementing social justice movements. The most pressing challenge we hope to address through this collaboration is the lack of integrated programming between child welfare and juvenile justice systems. In many states, these systems operate separately despite significant overlap between the young people they serve. In Massachusetts, for example, more than 50 percent of the young people committed to the Department of Youth Services have previously received services from the Department of Children and Families. By fostering a more strategic relationship between those organizations, we hope to develop better treatment and support programs for young people from unstable home environments and help deter them from juvenile crime.

Our involvement with the 2010 White House Conference on Child Welfare provides another example of our leadership in child advocacy. Together with the Child Welfare League of America and hundreds of other organizations, we are working to establish child advocacy as a priority for the new administration by encouraging discussions among national leaders and advocates about child welfare issues and policy development.

Realizing our agency's goals for the future would not be possible without the dedication and leadership of our extraordinary staff members, whose hard work led to amazing achievements in 2008. We must also recognize our board members, donors, and volunteers for helping to advance our mission over the past four decades. Moving forward, we hope to continue our efforts with your help and build an even brighter future for the children and families we serve.



Edward P. Kelley

EDWARD P. KELLEY

President & CEO

A Better Chance for a Healthy Life

FOUNDED: June 25, 1969, as a memorial to the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION: Private non-profit 501(c)(3) licensed child welfare agency and approved private schools

STRUCTURE: Oversight by volunteer board of directors; operational management led by president and CEO

ANNUAL BUDGET: \$24.9 million (FY 2008)

EMPLOYEES: 450

LOCATIONS: 9 across Massachusetts

PROGRAMS: 21 – including residential treatment, secure treatment, special education schools, group home, community-based, and adventure education

CHILDREN SERVED ANNUALLY: More than 900 children and families

The people of the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps believe that every child deserves the chance to lead a happy, healthy, and productive life. Every year, we help hundreds of children, youths, and their families deal successfully with behavioral and emotional challenges at facilities throughout the state. We operate a diverse range of programs and services in which young people develop healthier ways of interacting with others and increase their self-confidence, self-respect, and social skills.

Creating a strong network of support for the young people we serve is integral to our mission. To that end, our staff members serve as advocates for youths at detention hearings and foster positive community interaction through outreach programs. We also participate in community task forces and forums, collaborate with state and other child welfare agencies, and promote excellence by providing extensive professional development opportunities to our staff members.

► CORE VALUES

We believe:

In the legacy of Robert F. Kennedy — that society has a responsibility to the poor and disadvantaged

In respecting the dignity and individuality of every human being

That all children have the right to grow up in a safe and nurturing environment

That every person has a right to reach his or her full potential



Services

List of Programs

RESIDENTIAL



RFK Children's Action Corps operates eight staff-secure residential treatment programs. The young people living in our residences receive a combination of clinical, therapeutic, and educational services to help them confront past traumas and current challenges. In each of our programs, we maintain a supportive, stable, and safe environment where young people feel comfortable learning, healing, and growing.

- Boston Treatment Program
- Lancaster Campus
- South Hadley Girls Treatment Program
- Cape Cod Adolescent Treatment Center, South Yarmouth
- Springfield Secure Treatment Program
- White Street Group Home, Springfield
- Robert F. Kennedy School, Westborough
- Fay A. Rotenberg School, Westborough

COMMUNITY-BASED



We provide a range of treatment and advocacy programs for youths in the community. These include services that help divert them from juvenile detention, help them develop and retain positive connections within the community, facilitate successful re-entry into the community following residential treatment, help them overcome emotional and behavioral issues resulting from a difficult home environment, and teach them job, life, and leadership skills.

- Children of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (COASA), Boston
- Detention Diversion Advocacy Project (DDAP), Boston
- Youth Leadership Program for Girls (YLP), Boston
- Lawrence Community Re-Entry Center
- Eliot Community Re-Entry Center, Lowell
- Mentoring Program, Lowell

EDUCATIONAL



Guided by the core belief that everyone has the right to reach his or her full potential, RFK Children's Action Corps places a high priority on its educational programming. We operate two Chapter 766 schools, four Local Education Agency-approved schools in residential juvenile justice settings, and two community programs that offer GED preparation and job and life-skills coaching for youths and families. In every facility, we provide academic support paired with challenging curricula, and our schools offer credits that transfer to students' school districts. As a result, many young people in our care have been able to earn their high school diploma or GED.

- Experiment with Travel School, Holyoke
- Robert F. Kennedy School, Lancaster
- Lawrence Community Re-Entry Center
- Eliot Community Re-Entry Center, Lowell
- South Hadley Girls Treatment Program
- RFK Springfield Secure School, Springfield
- Robert F. Kennedy School, Westborough
- Fay A. Rotenberg School, Westborough

THERAPEUTIC

Our clinical services, which include individual and group-based therapy, enable our young people to work through emotional issues and learn to make healthier choices. Our clinicians and counselors also work closely with families and foster families to help ensure that every child returns to a stable and healthy home environment.

- All of the children in our residential programs and many in our community-based programs receive regular clinical services.



SPECIAL

RFK Children's Action Corps seeks unique ways to enhance our programs through activities that are therapeutic, educational, and fun. In recent years, we've made adventure education a critical agency-wide component of our programming. By participating in new activities – such as rock climbing, a ropes course, camping, and riding minibikes – children build confidence in themselves and trust in others. Additionally, our Bright Futures Adoption Center program provides adoption and foster care services for children who need stable home environments.



- Adventure Education, including the National Youth Project Using Minibikes (NYPUM)
- Bright Futures Adoption Center, Lancaster



Extending Our Reach

One of the ways we aim to strengthen our services at RFK Children's Action Corps is by extending our reach in the communities that need it most. In October 2008, RFK Children's Action Corps began operating the Boston Treatment Program in Roslindale, a secure residential treatment facility previously operated by the Justice Resource Institute. This acquisition enables our agency to strengthen its impact in Boston and the surrounding area, as well as provide more effective residential services by making it easier for family members to visit and participate in their children's treatment plans.

The Boston Treatment Program provides residential and clinical services for male youths between the ages of 13 and 21. As in all of our residential facilities, the young men in the Boston program participate in individualized treatment plans based on their specific backgrounds and issues. They also take part in community-sponsored events organized by local volunteers and RFK staff members, such as resume writing workshops and art therapy sessions.

One of our program's most successful events in 2008 was Men's Night, a dinner that featured inspirational speeches by prominent local figures including Suffolk County Court Judge Leslie Harris. He recounted his experiences growing up in the projects and overcoming the pressures of street life in order to pursue a law career. Brian Arrington, whose father, Richard Arrington, was Notre Dame's first black All-American football player, also spoke to the young men about his childhood in Roxbury and the challenges he faced despite growing up in a stable, two-parent family. He emphasized the importance of finding the "right fit" in terms of a career and advised the young men to explore opportunities at trade school or college.

While maintaining a safe and supportive environment in which young men can develop self-esteem and learn to be productive members of society, RFK Children's Action Corps will continue searching for opportunities to improve the Boston Treatment Program. Renovations on both of the facility's residential wings are already under way, as are plans to diversify recreational programming to include activities such as yoga and tae kwon do. We look forward to celebrating the success of our first program graduates in 2009.



▶ **AN AGENT OF CHANGE**

When Larry Hampton became the director of the Boston Treatment Program in October 2008, one of his first priorities was to cultivate a culture of support and mutual respect among his residents and staff members. After 21 years at the Robert F. Kennedy School in Westborough, where he served as director for the past five years, Larry knew that a positive environment was key to building relationships with young people and effectively dealing with behavior issues. “The kids need to know you’re going to support them,” says Larry. “Treatment works much better when the kids believe in you.”

Building a supportive environment and restructuring the program has required diligent effort and energy from Larry and his team, but the positive results are beginning to show. Rather than act out, the young men in the Boston Treatment Program are learning to engage with staff members and confront the issues that lie at the heart of their actions. “It’s a change in philosophy,” says Larry. “Before, when a kid got into a fight, he’d automatically be placed in confinement. Now we deal with his behavior and help him understand where that anger is coming from.”



▶ A PASSIONATE ADVOCATE

“I’ve always been an advocate for youth,” says Mark Speller. “I want to see them do great things, and I want to involve the community in that process.” His role as RFK’s mentoring program coordinator allows him to realize those passions, both in developing the program and managing its myriad activities.

In June, Mark collaborated with Massachusetts muralist Robert “Sidewalk Sam” Guillemain in bringing the statewide Paint for Peace project to Lowell. RFK teens painted doves throughout the city on sidewalks, schoolyards, and other public spaces. The project culminated in August with Lowell’s mayor, city manager, and members of the business community joining in the creation of a 40’ by 40’ peace dove in its government center plaza. The project not only added captivating images to city surfaces, but empowered the youths who took part.

One teen, Mark explains, took on a leadership role, working on the murals as well as supervising several Paint for Peace events. “He has since transitioned into the larger community,” he says. “He is now employed by a youth program in Lowell and does volunteer work. He’s an amazing artist, and one of his goals is to open his own tattoo business. I attribute his progress to his experiences in our mentoring program.”



A Rich Exchange

Together, they hit the court for a two-on-two basketball challenge, collaborate on fine arts projects, or learn about the living conditions of 19th-century seamen in an afternoon aboard the USS Constitution. Teens and adults in the RFK Children's Action Corps Mentoring Program find that when they share such activities and talk about them, they learn something about themselves, too.

Launched in 2008 at our Eliot Re-Entry Center in Lowell, the mentoring program brings together high-risk teens ages 15 to 19 with adult role models who provide personal, consistent support in their transition back to the community. The site-based, supervised program is one of only four such programs in the nation and is a powerful enhancement to our other services, providing tools for building pro-social behavior and reducing delinquency, recidivism, and other destructive and self-destructive behaviors.

The program has a mentor-to-mentee ratio of 2:1, and youths and adults participate in weekly activities as a group, a structure Mentoring Coordinator Mark Speller finds advantageous. "The group mentoring process allows them to naturally and eventually build strong one-on-one relationships," he says. Community members from all walks of life serve as mentors, enjoying activities with the teens and engaging them in discussions about future plans and personal goals.

"We've seen absolute successes," says Speller of the new program. "Our teens are engaged and interested, and the program has a profound effect on the mentors, too. They come back every Wednesday, and sometimes on other days just to spend time with the kids."

The Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps Mentoring Program was made possible by a challenge grant from Liberty Mutual and additional funding from the Theodore Edson Parker Foundation, the Gardiner Howland Shaw Foundation, and the Abbot & Dorothy H. Stevens Foundation, and with the support of a Massachusetts Promise fellow.

Four activities anchor the mentoring program:

- **Youth Leadership through Public Speaking** – Youths gain presentation and debating skills and self-confidence.
- **Teaching Tolerance** – Teens examine their personal experiences through comparison with documentaries and historical accounts of plights and successes of minorities.
- **Adventure Education** – Participation in outdoor activities, including rock climbing, a ropes course, hiking, snowshoeing, kayaking, and camping, teaches kids lessons about trust, leadership, and decision making.
- **NYPUM (National Youth Program Using Minibikes)** – Teens learn team-building skills and have the chance to show off their accomplishments in the annual NYPUM Rodeo, races, and other minibike events.



The Power of Knowledge

Educating the young people we serve continues to be a top priority for RFK Children's Action Corps. Whether reading Shakespeare or using algebra to solve a logic problem, the students in our educational programs learn to think critically and independently, develop self-confidence, and take responsibility for their future academic and professional endeavors.

In 2008, our GED programs in Lawrence and Lowell enjoyed their most successful year to date, with a total of 19 students receiving their GED credentials. This success reflects a program-wide shift in teaching approach that emphasizes one-on-one interactions between students and teachers. Instead of a traditional classroom setting in which every student is taught the same lesson at the same pace, our GED teachers develop individualized curricula for students that address their specific needs and abilities. As a result of the personalized attention and positive reinforcement they receive, our students perform better academically and learn to take pride in their work.

For many of our students, passing the GED exam is a life-changing event. Whether they go on to attend college or enter the workforce, our graduates move forward with newfound confidence as well as the knowledge that they are capable of great achievements. In support of our students' continued success, RFK staff members meet with them prior to graduation to discuss options and help them set goals for the future.

► SUCCESS STORIES

LOURDES, 17

For Lourdes, 17, receiving her GED in June of 2008 was a personal milestone as well as a steppingstone to the next phase of her life: college. In February 2009, Lourdes will begin her first semester at Northern Essex Community College and become the first woman in her family to attend an institute of higher education.

Lourdes plans to pursue paralegal studies and eventually transfer to a four-year college to major in criminal justice and law. "I'm more excited than nervous about going to college," she says. "I've always wanted to become a lawyer, and this is the next step for me in terms of reaching that goal."

HANSEL, 18

When Hansel was growing up, his world revolved around the street. But after being adjudicated delinquent and sent to a DYS facility, Hansel started to re-evaluate his former life. "I knew older people who never got an education, and they were struggling," he says. "Even though I felt like I was struggling, I realized I was lucky because I still had the opportunity to get an education."

In 2008, Hansel began the GED program at the Lawrence Community Re-Entry Center and passed his exam in October. He is currently applying for jobs and plans to work until he has enough money saved for college. "I was the underdog – the troublesome kid. I got out of that, and now I'm accomplishing a lot of things. I'm proud of what I've been able to do."

In 2008, 19 students from our Lowell and Lawrence Community Re-Entry Centers earned their GED credentials. In addition, seven students from our Springfield facility earned their high school diplomas.



▶ ENDURING CONNECTIONS

In November 2004, Andrew and Veronica were in the midst of selling their house and moving into a new home when they received a phone call from Bright Futures Adoption Center; a pregnant woman in Nevada had seen their parent profile and was interested in talking to them about adoption. After a preliminary phone call, Andrew and Veronica put their move on hold to fly to Nevada and meet the woman in person.

Over the course of the visit, the woman felt a connection with Andrew and Veronica and chose them as her baby's adoptive parents. She even invited them to attend the birth. Andrew and Veronica happily agreed and were in the labor room when their daughter, Gabrielle, was born. Both parties agreed to an open adoption so that Gabrielle could maintain some contact with her biological mother and siblings.

Andrew and Veronica have remained connected to Bright Futures Adoption Center by speaking at adoptive parent workshops and attending the agency's annual summer picnic. They are now considering a second adoption through Bright Futures.





A Continuum of Care

At RFK Children's Action Corps, we believe that innovative ideas are necessary to our success. In 2008, we decided to pursue a new direction and merged with Bright Futures Adoption Center, a small nonprofit based in Acton, Massachusetts. By becoming directly involved in the permanent placement of children and youths without stable home environments, RFK Children's Action Corps hopes to significantly strengthen its continuum of care for those who need it most.

Bright Futures Adoption Center will open in 2009 at our Lancaster facility, where approximately 25 percent of the young people in placement are looking for adoptive or foster families. In addition to continuing Bright Futures' infant adoption program, which specializes in open adoptions and welcoming families of color, RFK and Bright Futures staff members are working together to develop foster care, adoption, and alternative permanency services to meet the needs of the children and youths we serve.

We believe that adoption is about finding the right family for a child, not just a child for a family. To that end, one of our goals for the Bright Futures program is to develop targeted training and counseling services for adoptive families that address a child's background and emotional issues. In doing so, we hope to ease a child's transition into his or her new home and create a supportive foundation that will promote long-term success and happiness for families.

"Bright Futures Adoption Center will provide a much-needed service for the kids at RFK. We're working to develop individualized programming that extends into the post-adoption period so that adoptive families have all the resources they need."

- CINDY SCHOFIELD
Director of Program
Development and
Training, Lancaster
Campus
*Mother of two adopted
sons, Jake, 5 1/2 and
Connor, 4*

2008 Financials

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash	647,268
Accounts Receivable	2,676,716
Prepaid Expenses	315,324
Other Current Assets	223,281
Total Current Assets	3,862,589

OTHER ASSETS

Net Land & Building	8,388,103
Long-Term Investments	1,600,639
Other Assets	852,455
Total Assets	14,703,786

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	483,912
Accrued Expenses	1,808,669
Current Long-Term Debt	117,352
Deferred Revenue	83,072
Total Current Liabilities	2,493,005

OTHER LIABILITIES

Bonds Payable	4,848,736
Notes Payable	578,374
Interest Rate Swap	325,876
Total Other Liabilities	5,752,986
Total Liabilities	8,245,991

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	5,430,201
Temporarily Restricted	1,027,594
Total Net Assets	6,457,795

Total Liabilities & Net Assets **14,703,786**

A copy of the complete audited financial statements prepared by McGladrey & Pullen, LLP is available upon request.

OPERATING REVENUE:

\$25,022,460

Department of Youth Services (DYS)	43%
Department of Children and Families (DCF)	35%
Cities & Towns	14%
Contributions & Gifts	3%
Other (Investment, Dept. of Education, Misc.)	3%
Grants	2%

OPERATING EXPENSES:

\$24,707,108

Lancaster Programs	35%
Secure Treatment for Boys	19%
Treatment Program for Girls	11%
Administration and General	10%
Other Residential Programs	7%
Detention Support Services	6%
Community-Based Services	6%
Fundraising	3%
Special Education Day Services	3%

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*Director of Training &
Quality Assurance*



Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps
11 Beacon Street
Suite 200
Boston, MA 02108

Tel: 617.227.4183
Toll free: 877.735.3500

www.rfkchildren.org

