



Annual Report

2023



*Youth & Family
Services*™

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— Our Mission —

The mission of Youth & Family Services is to support children and their families in being capable, caring, and contributing members of the community.

A Message from Our CEO



As we move into a new fiscal year, I want to extend my appreciation to the staff, board of directors, supporters, volunteers, and community partners that helped Youth & Family Services achieve a successful year of mission-driven work.

Each day, we are reminded the services we provide are critical in helping children and their families thrive. It is with conviction and steadfastness that we continue to provide resources, education, inspiration, and joy to those we serve. We believe every child should grow up happy, healthy, and with hope. Each of our programs supports children in establishing futures where they will be better

equipped to create positive change, recover from setbacks, seek out opportunities for growth and success, and grow into happy, productive adults.

There continues to be a strong demand for services that support children and families in our community. We remain committed to our vision that all children in western South Dakota develop healthy bodies, inquiring minds, wholesome relationships, compassionate hearts, creative spirits, the conviction to stand up for themselves and others, and the courage to build a better society.

Youth & Family Services is poised to partner with the community in exceedingly creative and impactful ways. We thank you for your commitment to our vision and mission and hope you find solace knowing the stories and numbers of those served in this report were a direct result of your support. Together, we help kids.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Julius".

John Julius,
Chief Executive Officer

The following stories showcase some of the ways our programs help support children and their families in our community while working to fulfill the vision of our organization. To protect the privacy of those we serve, we use alternative names and photos to ensure confidentiality.

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Healthy Bodies

Molly, a single mother to three children, became acquainted with Youth & Family Services (YFS) last summer when she and her children began coming to our East Monroe Street site to participate in YFS' Summer Food Program. "I was really thankful for the free meals. Me and my kids were living in our car at the time, so being able to sit and eat together in the air conditioning was kind of a luxury," she shared.

Staff from YFS' Rapid City Head Start® program—also based at the East Monroe Street site—struck up conversations with Molly on several occasions and began to build rapport with the family. After learning more about Molly's current situation, they knew they could offer her family support. Staff were able to enroll Molly's youngest daughter in YFS' Rapid City Head Start and help Molly enroll her two older daughters in YFS' Girls Inc. of Rapid City.



Aside from being homeless, Molly faced several other obstacles, one of which is her ongoing struggle with multiple sclerosis (MS). Molly shared with support staff that, because of her financial situation, she hadn't been visiting her doctor or taking medication. "I didn't even have a primary doctor at that point," she noted. YFS' Family Service staff worked with Molly to find a primary care provider for herself and for her children. Molly was able to get her much needed medications and the children received their physicals and necessary immunizations.

The family was also in need of clothing and shoes. Staff obtained the sizes of the children and Molly would regularly go through agency donations to find clothing for the family. "I can't even tell you how much I appreciated being able to find clean clothes for my kids that fit. The girls were excited about every new find. It boosted their confidence which was really special to see," Molly remarked. Shoes were hard to find in donations so staff personally went out and purchased shoes for the children. Hygiene products were also supplied to the family.

Housing was clearly one of the biggest obstacles the family faced. Rapid City Head Start staff worked to secure weekly hotel rooms for the family to give them temporary relief from living in their car. Staff helped Molly fill out applications for low-income housing and helped her search for a home. Eventually, Molly found a home in Box Elder. Her youngest daughter was transferred to one of our Head Start classrooms in the Douglas schools. Staff helped Molly transfer her older daughters to the Douglas School District, as well. The family is now in a home and out of their car. "YFS has been such a blessing to our family," Molly stated. "I feel like we had an army behind us, helping us restart our lives. We are truly thankful."

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Inquiring Minds

Most children are naturally creative and thrive in spaces where they feel supported. When children are given opportunities to explore their own ideas and passions, they grow.

This was the case for Kori. She began attending YFS' Girls Inc. of Rapid City when she was in the fourth grade; she is now going into eighth grade. For several years, Kori has shown a strong interest in science and technology. Both her parents work in fields that utilize science and information technology on a daily basis, spurring her interest further.



When Kori's class at YFS' Girls Inc. would participate in Operation SMART (science, math, and relevant technology), Kori would always volunteer to assist staff. Once she aged out of YFS' Girls Inc. and was enrolled in YFS' Middle School Program, she was ecstatic to learn she would have access to YFS' robotics lab. "I love thinking about a problem and working out solutions using coding or creating things on the 3D printer. I've wanted to learn more about coding and robots since I was a little kid," she remarked.

Every day, without exception, Kori would ask her teacher if they could visit the robotics lab. She was excited to explore and experiment with all the technology options available to her from the robots to the 3D printer to the laser engraver; however, Kori found she is most passionate about coding. "It's been so cool to learn how to code the robots!" she exclaimed. "It's so satisfying when you finally get them to do what you want." Kori has learned to code very well with the modular Cubelets, Sphero mini robot balls, and the Edison robot.

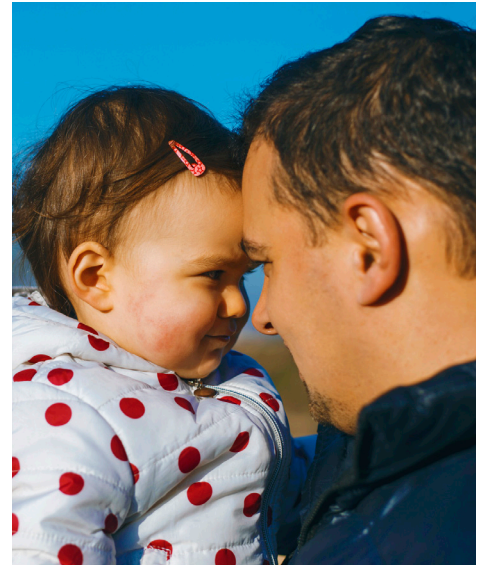
Kori continues to expand her knowledge, and is very excited to learn more about coding more advanced robots. In addition to broadening her own interests, she also volunteers to help other students with their coding efforts.

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Wholesome Relationships

Promoting strong, loving, positive relationships between parents and children is just one component of YFS' Home-Based Early Head Start program. Staff support families by helping parents positively engage with their children as they work together toward the goals families set for themselves and their children. Safe, stable parent-child relationships support attachment and positively impact nearly all aspects of a child's development.

This past January, Marcus, the father of a beautiful 1-year-old girl, participated in an activity designed to promote a loving, nurturing relationship with his child. Staff encouraged him to write a New Year's love letter to his daughter that included what he loves about her, how she makes him feel, his hopes for her future, and any other special messages. In his letter, Marcus told his daughter, "You are only one year old, but you bring me so much joy when you are around." Marcus went on to describe how her laugh lit up his heart and how her curious nature makes him wonder where her interests will lie in the future. He described how even simple things like watching her play with toys and walking down their hallway filled him with happiness. He wrote, "The smile you give me when I greet you after each sleep makes me proud and happy to be your father." Marcus goes on to promise his daughter to do whatever he can to ensure she never loses her smile. He concluded his letter by writing, "I can't wait to see you run and to teach you how to ride a bike in a few years. I hope to see you grow up to be a confident and kind young woman."



Although children enrolled in Early Head Start are between the ages of 0-3 years and aren't able to read the letters now, parents are encouraged to save these letters as personal mementos and share them with their child once they're older. In addition to being keepsakes for their children later on, these letters help parents reflect on what they value most about their children and remind them to cherish the time they have to spend with them.

Marcus shared with his Family Development Specialist how much he enjoyed participating in this project. "I didn't think I'd get as emotional as I did writing it, and even though I've always known Arianna is special, writing down all the things she makes me feel really drove home how lucky I am to be her dad."

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Compassionate Hearts

Throughout the year, girls enrolled in YFS' Girls Inc. program decide on community service projects to engage in. Sometimes this involves making dog treats and delivering them to the Humane Society of the Black Hills. Other times it is creating cards for the American Red Cross or veterans organizations. Around national holidays, the girls make decorations or treats for those living in nursing homes or senior living facilities. They also participate in Rapid City's annual City Wide Cleanup Project.

Community service projects not only allow the girls to be creative, but they encourage them to give back to our community. They learn to take responsibility, plan and participate in the projects they commit to, and take pride in the value their efforts have. The girls learn they can be a catalyst for change and positivity.



One of the projects the girls participated in this past May was sharing May Day baskets with residents of several local nursing homes. As they delivered the baskets, they spent time visiting with the residents and shared and listened to stories. "It was fun to go see all of the grandmas," Sophia, age 10, shared. "I met Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Lily. They liked their baskets and said they would love us to come back."

Staff from one of the residential facilities shared with Girls Inc. staff that these visits are absolute highlights for many of their residents, especially those who don't often have visitors. Children gain knowledge from visiting with seniors and it is fantastic for their social development.

By giving back and participating in community service projects, youth are able to practice kindness, see things from different perspectives, and understand they can play a larger role in the world around them. The projects enhance their self-esteem and help them develop a greater sense of empathy. Sophia reflected on her experience and recalled, "It felt good to make someone smile. I think we made their day a little better, but it made my day better, too."

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Creative Spirits

Seeking input from the children we serve allows them to feel involved and gives them a sense of power and control over what they do. It also helps ensure the services we provide meet the individual needs and interests of children. This is why, for the second summer in a row, children attending YFS' Child Development Center's school-age program are participating in acting activities facilitated by performers from Black Hills Community Theatre.

At the end of each school year, staff at YFS' Child Development Center ask for input from the school-age children about what types of field trips they'd like to go on and what activities they would be interested in participating in during summer months. Last year, the children expressed interest in learning more about theatre and drama. A staff member reached out to Black Hills Community Theatre, knowing they offered outreach programs for children. They worked out a plan for the children to visit the theatre once each week. During their lesson time, the children learned some of the fundamentals of theatre, played improv games, and worked on acting out the children's story *The Mitten*. Each child was assigned an animal to play. The children enjoyed themselves so much they decided to continue taking classes this summer.



The teaching staff at YFS' Child Development Center, as well as several parents, noticed the theatre classes were having a positive impact on the children participating. In addition to being a great stress reliever, theatre helps boost bravery, creativity, and social skills. "Noah is typically very shy," shared Bryce, Noah's father. "I was surprised he was interested in theatre. At home, he talked a lot about working with the actors and what he was learning. Noah definitely seems more outgoing now. The other day I heard him reading a book to a cousin. He was acting out the characters as he read. It was a fun exchange to watch."

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Conviction to Stand Up for Themselves and Others

Helping kids find their inner voice and teaching them to assert themselves are important skills they will use throughout their lives. Teens who can advocate for themselves have higher self-esteem, often display more leadership qualities, and form better relationships. In addition to learning to stand up for themselves, it is also important that children and young adults learn to speak up for others.

YFS' Stronger Youth Program has been collaborating with Rapid City Area Schools (RCAS) and Working Against Violence, Inc. (WAVI) for several years to bring together compassionate young leaders in a group known as Take ACTION. Many of these young people have experienced a variety of challenges in their short lives such as witnessing domestic violence, experiencing abuse, or struggling with mental health issues. Together, they use their experiences to fuel their passion for helping other youth in our community.



One way these students work to support their peers is by creating educational films covering topics affecting youth. "We choose a topic that is important to us that we feel needs to be addressed," stated Micah, a sophomore member of Take ACTION. "Then we write the script, rehearse, and perform the skit while being filmed." The video is edited by a professional and turned into a short film. The students produce approximately one film per year. In the past several years, they have created films on trauma, dating violence, sexting, healthy and unhealthy relationships, LGBTQ+ and identity issues, substance abuse, and more. Currently, the students are working on a script concerning anxiety and its correlation to school attendance. The finished films are used as teaching tools by Take ACTION, RCAS, YFS, and other groups. They help raise awareness about important issues teens are facing and provide viewers with resources and solutions.

Guiding youth to better empower themselves and others isn't something that happens overnight. It's a continual process of creating confidence, promoting self-awareness, and encouraging problem-solving. "It feels good to be part of something that is making a difference," shared Micah. "It's not always easy talking about some of these things, but I think we're helping other kids know they're not alone and that help is available."

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Courage to Build a Better Society

It is remarkable to see young minds process new information. They sometimes have the ability to get directly to the essence of a complicated, complex topic. Their unique insight and perception, and perhaps naivety, can every so often influence adults to rethink attitudes and prejudices by drawing on our maturity to be open minded, reflective, and attempt healing.

YFS' Western Prevention Resource Center seeks to divert those we serve from high risk behaviors to promote choices resulting in lifelong mind and body wellness. Staff provide education and leadership through peer support trainings. These trainings often focus on challenging topics like suicide, mental illness, substance abuse, and violence.



During such a training, YFS' Western Prevention Resource Center's Coordinator met with a group of high school students from Pine Ridge to talk about the difficult topic of suicide. Teen suicide has reached an epidemic level. According to new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the total number of suicide deaths increased in 2021. Overall, 22% of high school students said that they have seriously considered suicide within the past year. Eighteen percent said that they made a suicide plan, and 10% said they attempted suicide at least once. Suicide rates are even higher among American Indian communities, and they are highest among youth and young adults, ages 15–34.

The training and subsequent discussions were difficult but everyone in attendance remained engaged and participated. Several individuals even felt compelled to share personal stories of grief and loss. After listening to an individual share their experience of being with someone as they passed by suicide, the group took a needed break. During the break, a young man reached out to the person who shared their traumatic experience. He acknowledged with the individual that it must have been hard to be there and then handed them a drawing of an eagle feather atop the words, "Grass is bound to sprout after every fire." This kind gesture brought peace. It highlighted this young man's ability to stand strong in his beliefs with courage as he faces life's challenges.

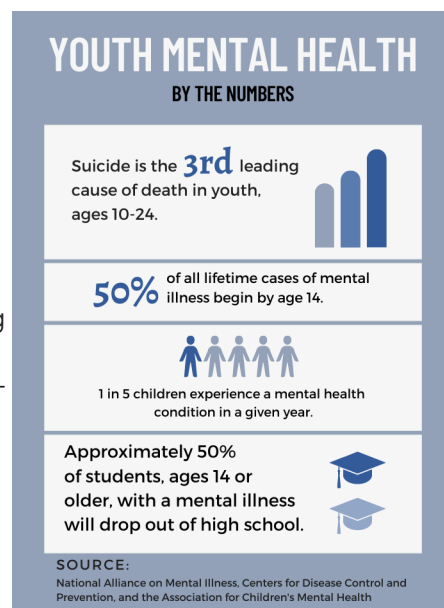
— Program Information —

Child Development Center

- During the past program year, **219** children engaged in educational and recreational activities designed to foster their overall development. Of those 219 children, 42 were infants and toddlers, 126 were preschoolers, and 51 were school age. Of the children enrolled at YFS' Child Development Center, **63** percent come from single-parent households and **66** percent are a minority race.
- YFS' Child Development Center is designed to meet the unique needs of low-income families. Thanks to support from the United Way of the Black Hills, we continue to maintain a low-income client base of **86** percent.
- To better meet the needs of families living in poverty, we have incorporated Head Start/Early Head Start into our programming. Children, ages 4 weeks to 5 years, enrolled in this option receive developmental screenings, family services assistance, health and wellness education, counseling services, and nutrition services. Last year, **42** children received Early Head Start services and **95** children received Head Start services.

Counseling Center

- YFS Counseling Center' served **261** unduplicated youth and adults in the last year through assessment, counseling, and psychosocial group facilitation. Of those, **141** were new to our program.
- All YFS counselors have master's degrees in counseling or social work as well as specialized training in issues related to children, families, and trauma. Three therapists completed their final certification process for Natural Lifemanship, a trauma-focused equine-assisted therapy. Another therapist is working to complete her certification in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy. All YFS' therapists completed a week-long training in the Good Lives Model, a treatment used for problematic sexual behaviors. Our therapists are also completing a 60+ hour training in Trauma-Focused Expressive Arts therapy.
- From July 2022 to June 2023, YFS' Youth Trauma Center screened **227** children and family members for traumatic stress, completed **116** trauma intake assessments and **80** clinical trauma reassessments. Of the children and youth served, **86** participated in equine therapy. YFS' Youth Trauma Center also provided training, information, and resources to more than **125** mental health professionals, employees of youth-serving organizations, and community members.
- This past year, YFS' Counseling Center provided assistance and support at no cost to **82** individuals who were victims of crimes, thanks to a grant from Victims of Crime Assistance (VOCA), a program of the Department of Public Safety. Additionally, **12** men have been treated using the Duluth Model for perpetrators of domestic violence.

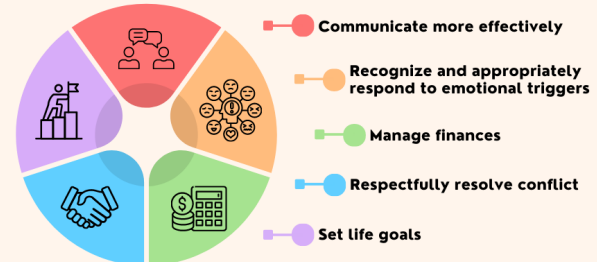


Family Support and Advocacy Services

- YFS' Family Support and Advocacy Services is comprised of several programs—Boys' Health Program, Health Connections, Stronger Family Program, Stronger Youth Program, and Connect—that offer support, education, mentoring, coaching, and access to needed services and resources for families, parents, and children.
- From July 2022 to June 2023, **67** girls and boys received services through YFS' Health Connections and Boys' Health Programs. These innovative, referral-based programs work to meet the physical, mental, and social health needs of at-risk children, ages 5 to 18, by connecting them with medical, dental, and mental health service providers in the community. Children are referred to these programs by school counselors, teachers, parents, and health and social service agencies. Last year, Health Connections and the Boys' Health Program referred a total of **61** boys and girls to mental health therapists, connected **5** to oral health professionals, helped **3** children secure optical care, and referred **17** for other medical appointments. All of these boys and girls also received referrals to other supportive services and received some type of mentoring during the year.
- YFS' Stronger Youth Program¹ served **434** unduplicated youth during the last year through relationship education classes. Youth Educators delivered a series of evidenced-based relationship education classes to youth enrolled in multiple area high schools. In June 2023, the Stronger Youth Program completed a youth camp. At that event, **17** youth received relationship education training and participated in leadership development activities.
- The Stronger Family Program² enrolled **247** new adults this past year. After completing our Active Relationship classes, staff referred **81** participants to other community partners for supplemental services. Many participants also enrolled in a variety of auxiliary classes including our Love and Logic parenting classes, Myers-Briggs workshops, and Introduction to Anger Management. Staff continually receive feedback from participants about how these classes are saving their marriages, enhancing their personal lives, or improving their ability to manage their emotions during conflict. Our clients often refer their friends and family members to our program. Many of the participants who attend our classes have compounding challenges that include housing issues, addiction and recovery, extreme poverty, crisis situations, family violence, felony records, and more. Participating in YFS' Stronger Family Program classes is helping families break cycles, including cycles going back several generations.
- Stronger Family Program staff are continuing to participate in the Wellness Committee at South Dakota Mines (SDM) and are building a strong collaborative relationship with the campus programs. In August of 2022, during Resident Assistant (RA) orientation, educators provided a mini-session on strong relationships and how to navigate roommate conflicts and similar topics. RAs were presented with the opportunity to participate in community-based Active Relationships classes at YFS. Eight RAs signed up, with six completing the entire course. Those who finished the course spoke very highly of their experience and shared they learned a lot. Staff is currently in conversation with the RA Director to discuss providing this service with the new cohort of RAs for the upcoming academic year.

RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

YFS' Stronger Family Program's Active Relationships Classes offer individuals and couples the opportunity to learn a variety of important and practical life skills that help them establish and sustain more successful relationships with friends, family, co-workers, supervisors, spouses, and others.



- In May 2023, staff from Family Support and Advocacy Services attended the Phoenix Roundtable, a Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) grantee support and advancement project. More than 100 representatives of HMRF grantees from all over the country attended. YFS' Stronger Family Program staff were invited to speak to the group about the partnerships we have fostered throughout our seven plus years. Those in attendance were impressed to learn we have managed to build and sustain more than 100 unique partnerships with various organizations in the community. They asked many questions about how these relationships are sustainable with limited staff time. YFS staff explained that Rapid City has several community meetings where various organizations and nonprofit staff gather to share resources and learn more about each other's programs. This enables those working in the community to make better referrals to meet the needs of families. This community approach enables organizations to better meet the needs of our friends and neighbors by building a protective net to support them.
- YFS' Connect³ program is designed to respond to and advocate for youth and young adults, ages 11–24, who have been affected by sexual violence, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or trafficking. Connect provides trainings to youth and other community members about these issues in order to increase awareness and promote change. Additionally, Connect encourages youth leaders to assist in teaching these lessons. In the past year, Connect provided case management, mentoring, and trauma intervention programming to **34** youth, and wrap-around support services to their families. In addition, staff provided healthy relationship education, prevention services, and leadership/positive bystander training to **80** youth.
- This past year, YFS' health advocacy programs—Boys' Health Program and Health Connections—received funding from the South Dakota Department of Health to participate in a new, statewide Community Health Worker (CHW) initiative. The state received a federal grant to help launch and sustain a workforce until that workforce could become eligible to bill Medicaid for their services. The first partial year of funding began in August 2022 and continued through the end of the state's fiscal year on May 31, 2023. YFS received a second year of this funding, which will end on May 31, 2024. YFS completed its application to become a Medicaid agency for CHW services and was approved. Currently, one Health Connections advocate is certified and eligible to bill Medicaid for services and another is working to complete the coursework to become eligible. We are in the process of setting up a new electronic health records system that will allow YFS to bill for services for Medicaid-eligible youth enrolled in these programs.



¹ Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant # 90ZD0014. These services are available to all eligible persons, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, or religion.

² Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant # 90ZB0015. These services are available to all eligible persons, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, or religion.

³ This project was supported by Grant No. 2019-CY-AX-0011 awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

Garden Education Project

- YFS' Garden Education Project offers year-round classes to children enrolled in YFS' programs. Classes are facilitated indoors and outdoors at our various growing locations. This past year, YFS' Garden Education Specialist provided more than **315** garden education classes to **322** enrolled children and youth, ages 2-18. Children from **17** classrooms in **5** YFS programs participate in the garden activities. Topics covered included reading seed packets, germination, starting seeds, cool and warm season crops, seedling identification and care, transplanting, composting, worms and vermicomposting, pollination, seed saving, and more. In addition to providing educational activities to enrolled children, YFS' Garden Education Specialist provided take-home gardening kits and implemented a garden activity with **3** YFS parents and **4** children during a Home-Based Head Start garden social.
- Community support is vital to the success of YFS' Garden Education Project. In the past year, more than **226** community members volunteered their time to make and install stepping stones, till gardens, pull weeds, tend the fruit trees, help with the honeybees, and other tasks at YFS Fullerton Farm and otherwise help with the Garden Education Project.
- Enrolled children and youth, with the help of YFS' Garden Education Specialist, planted and cared for **300** tomato, pepper, broccoli, pumpkin, and other bedding plants in the Greenhouse Classroom. These seedlings were transplanted to **3** on-site raised bed gardens and the farm. They also planted and harvested hydroponic lettuce in YFS' Greenhouse Classroom. The lettuce was delivered to YFS' kitchens and the children later enjoyed a salad with their meal.
- In September 2022, YFS hosted its 5th Annual Harvest Festival at its Fullerton Farm in Box Elder. This free event, open to the public, attracted nearly **440** individuals. Guests learned about honeybees, indigenous plants, composting, soil health, and recycling; tasted fresh fruits and vegetables; engaged with live chickens, baby rabbits, and fainting goats; enjoyed chef-made Thai spring rolls with peanut sauce; and had numerous other experiences.

Girls Inc. of Rapid City

- During the past fiscal year, **474** girls, ages 6-11, engaged in programs that inspired them to be strong, smart, and bold.
- During the school year, the YFS Girls Inc. Literacy Program provides extra hands-on activities and support to girls in kindergarten through third grade who have been identified as reading below their grade level. In the summer, Readers Corner is available to all girls. Reading and journaling are encouraged by staff, year-round. This past year, **384** girls participated literacy-focused programming.
- YFS Girls Inc. Operation SMART (science, math, and relevant technology) encourages girls to engage in science and math activities and investigate nontraditional, technical/vocational, or scientific careers. In the past year, **374** girls explored, had fun, and got messy through hands-on activities, career mentoring experiences, and laboratory experimentation.
- Children naturally want to be compassionate to others. By giving back to the community who supports them, members of YFS Girls Inc. are gaining a sense of pride and self-esteem. This past year, enrolled girls created cards, notes, and small gifts to distribute to other local nonprofits, residents of local nursing homes, and veterans to celebrate various holidays throughout the year. They also picked up litter in a portion of Rapid City during City Cleanup Week.

HELPING GIRLS REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

GIRLS INC. RECOMMENDS FOUR CRUCIAL SUPPORTS THAT ALLOW GIRLS TO REALIZE THEIR POTENTIAL

THE RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS

When girls have models of success and the perspectives of strong women, they thrive. Robust peer networks and safe environments also help them create positive relationships with others.



ENCOURAGEMENT TO DEVELOP AND USE THEIR VOICES

Girls are amazing advocates for themselves, for each other, and for important causes when they know how, when, and where to get their point across. Girls Inc. helps girls develop their voices and build self-confidence.



A POSITIVE SELF-IMAGE

Successful girls appreciate their bodies (and all kinds of bodies) and make choices that keep them healthy. They are comfortable with themselves, both physically and emotionally, and make choices that help them lead satisfying, safe, and healthy lives.



INTELLECTUAL CONFIDENCE

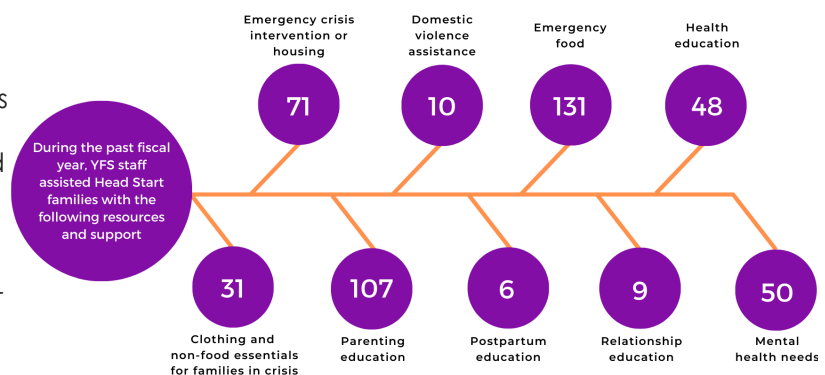
Education isn't just preparation for the next milestone in life, but a habit of mind that will allow girls to learn all their lives. Girls Inc. girls are more likely to attend and engage in school, show curiosity for STEM subjects, and have self-confidence in reading.



Source: Girls Inc. "Take the Lead" report

Head Start

- Head Start and Early Head Start programs help children, ages 0-5, prepare to succeed in school and in life through learning experiences tailored to their changing needs and abilities. We do this by offering services that enhance children's early learning and development, health and wellness, and family well-being and engagement at no cost to families. YFS' Head Start services are offered in center-based and home-based settings. Services for expectant parents are also available.
- During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, YFS provided Head Start programming to **733** children and their families living in seven western South Dakota counties. Rapid City Head Start served **29** infants/toddlers and **352** preschool children; Home-Based Head Start served **134** infants/toddlers and **70** preschool children; and our Child Development Center served **42** infants/toddlers and **106** preschool children.
- Contributions by parents and volunteers are vital to the success of children enrolled in Head Start. Last year, family members and volunteers contributed more than **56,702** hours to YFS' Head Start programs.
- Recognizing that fathers play an important role in their child's development, YFS Head Start actively engages them in our program. Last year, **221** fathers of enrolled children completed family assessments, **142** participated in establishing goals for their families, and **120** participated in home visits, parent-teacher conferences, or volunteered. Seven fathers participated in parent education workshops.



Middle School Program

- During the past fiscal year, our program served **172** youth. YFS' Middle School Program places a large focus on working to increase the social and emotional learning (SEL) and development of early adolescent girls and boys, advance positive social behaviors and self-regulation, increase communication skills between parents and adolescent youth, improve academic performance, and connect middle school youth with mentors, coaches, and advocates to meet their unique needs. During the past fiscal year, **87** students participated in SEL programming and **39** participated in prevention programming.
- In addition to day-to-day programming at YFS' Middle School Program, youth engaged in collaborative partnerships with YFS' Stronger Youth Program, YFS' Connect program, and YFS' Garden Education Project. During their time connecting with these programs and organizations, youth engaged in group yoga, mindfulness, prevention with a focus on raising awareness of missing and murdered indigenous women, learning about consent and the health and safety of women in relationships, violence, and sexual assault.
- STEM programming is an integral part of YFS' Middle School Program. It encourages youth to engage in hands-on learning using real-world applications while developing a variety of skills. Last year, **147** students participated in STEM programming and activities that helped them understand a range of concepts, learn new skills, and hone their ability to think critically.
- Middle school is the time when youth are developing more sophisticated reading skills. These skills will help students hunt for information, make sense of complex material, and find enjoyment in literature. These skills are also necessary for students to excel in other subjects including math, science, and social studies. YFS' Middle School Program helps students strengthen their literacy skills, year-round, to help give them a solid foundation for academic success and encourage love of language arts. Last year, **148** unduplicated youth participated in group and individual reading sessions, journaling activities, book clubs, and educational experiences that focused on financial and media literacy.

Nutrition Services

- During the past year, YFS' Nutrition Services provided or oversaw the provision of **622,449** meals and snacks to children. YFS cooks prepared and served food at two of our Rapid City sites and delivered prepared meals to children enrolled in YFS programs at our Douglas School site.
- The YFS Family Child Care Nutrition Program partnered with **107** family child care providers in **30** western South Dakota counties to oversee the provision of **477,323** meals and snacks between July 2022 and June 2023. This program helps caregivers serve nutritious meals to children, ages 12 and younger. Nutrition staff members visit the homes and centers of the child care providers to offer technical support with menu planning, nutrition education, and program management.
- Last year, YFS' Nutrition Services staff members monitored and accommodated the special diet and food allergy needs of **114** children.
- In 2022, YFS' Summer Food Program returned to providing free, on-site lunches to children, ages 1-18; accompanying adults, ages 19-59; and adults 60+. In July and August of 2022, YFS' Nutrition Services prepared and served a combined total of **22,381** lunches. Of those lunches, **20,123** were served to children at YFS' East Adams and Monroe sites and **2,258** were served to adults. Funding for the adult meals was provided by a grant from Black Hills Area Community Foundation and through a partnership with Meals on Wheels.
- YFS' 2023 Summer Food Program kicked off on June 5. YFS' Monroe site provided free lunches to any children, ages 1-18, thanks to the sponsorship of the USDA. Additionally, thanks to a generous grant from Black Hills Area Community Foundation and an on-going partnership with Meals on Wheels, YFS has been able to provide free lunches to adults. As of June 2023, YFS provided **1,539** lunches to children and **1,046** meals to adults at its open Monroe site, and **5,683** breakfasts and lunches to enrolled children at YFS' East Adams site.



This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Western Prevention Resource Center

- YFS' Western Prevention Resource Center (WPRC) has remained committed to assisting students, parents, educators, community groups, social service and mental health agencies, chemical dependency service providers, and law enforcement personnel in developing and implementing prevention programs in **22** western South Dakota counties.
- Last year, YFS' WPRC provided direct prevention programming to **2,472** unduplicated individuals and had **6,964** instances of direct impact on youth and adults. This included evidence-based prevention education support that was delivered to approximately **1,860** youth. YFS' WPRC provided suicide prevention training to **139** unduplicated adults.
- During this past fiscal year, the WPRC provided grant-sponsored oversight of the Communities that Care grantees in Mellette and Fall River counties. Those grants target prevention services to a population of **9,110** county residents.

Community Support



Youth & Family Services Diamonds and Denim Dinner Theatre is a two-night event designed to showcase YFS' programs and share how the services YFS provides impact youth. Funding raised at the event—nearly **\$79,000**—allows YFS to continue to meet the needs of underserved children in our community. An additional **\$113,000** was raised in support of YFS' East Adams Expansion Project and the YFS Foundation endowment.

Our 16th annual event took place October 7-8, 2022. Guests enjoyed a toe-tapping performance by Kenny Putnam and The Lonely Rangers, relished a delicious dinner provided by Outback Steakhouse with desserts prepared and donated by the Black Hills Chapter of the American Culinary Federation, and had access to a silent auction. Additionally, YFS—in partnership with McPherson Auction & Realty—hosted an online auction that was open to the public.

YFS' 17th Annual Diamonds and Denim Dinner Theatre is set for October 27-28, 2023. Featured entertainment will be live musical performances by The Abbey Road Band.

Smiling faces, laughter, and excitement filled the air at the 26th Annual Youth & Family Services Kids Fair! This two-day, family-friendly event drew **8,379** children and their families to The Monument. Children and families enjoyed educational entertainment, numerous inflatable attractions, train rides, and costumed characters. In addition, **58** vendors provided hands-on activities for children to experience. Thanks to our sponsors, vendors, and the community, **\$126,703** was raised to support YFS' programs and fixed costs.



The success of Kids Fair depends not only on the financial generosity of our sponsors, but also on the willingness of community members to give their time. Last year, **593** volunteers collectively gave **2,520** hours of their time at Kids Fair. That's a value of approximately **\$47,480**.

The 27th Annual YFS Kids Fair is slated for April 6-7, 2024.

Helping children create wonderful holiday memories is a priority for many groups. Kicking off the holiday season, Denny Menholt Auto Group purchased more than 400 Thanksgiving meals for YFS families. With the help of airmen and women from Ellsworth Air Force Base's 28th Operations Support Squadron and the employees of the United States Postal Service in Rapid City, Santa and Mrs. Claus visited YFS' Child Development Center and hand-delivered a gift to each enrolled child. The Rapid City Woodworkers Association provided several hundred hand-crafted wooden toys for children enrolled in YFS' Head Start programs. Z 106-3, Classic Hits Q 92-3, and KOTA Radio 1380—three of Riverfront Broadcasting's radio stations—helped collect 100 gifts for girls enrolled in YFS' Girls Inc. and Health Connections programs with support from their listeners. Recognizing that being a single parent during the holidays can be challenging, O & A Farmhouse sponsored a giving tree to benefit 60 single moms. More than 145 donors stepped up to provide gifts and a holiday meal for families who were struggling or facing challenges this season.

Additionally, YFS partnered with Brian and Kaija Bonde, Boyd Bristow, Mike Connor, Owen DeJong, Al Remund, Larry Rohrer, Kenny Putnam, and Tom Schaefer to celebrate the sounds of the holiday season during a benefit concert, *Holiday for Fiddlers*. The concert, which took place at the Performing Arts Center, raised more than \$21,900 to help support YFS' programs.



YFS Foundation

Youth & Family Services Foundation (YFSF) is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization that was established in 2004 to promote philanthropy, receive and administer charitable gifts, and support the mission and activities of Youth & Family Services, Inc.



YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES
FOUNDATION

YFSF provides an opportunity for individuals to create a powerful philanthropic legacy by making a direct impact on the future of Youth & Family Services' programs in a lasting and meaningful way. As the world continues to become more complex, legacy gifts are vital to accomplishing our vision and addressing future challenges that children will face.

- During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, YFS Foundation provided **\$140,826** to YFS, Inc. for programs, services, and fixed costs, as well as **\$232,890** to support the recent YFS facility expansion project. Youth & Family Services, Inc. considers these funds to be critical to the operation of our programs as they help to cover budget shortfalls and ensure that all children enrolled in YFS programs receive high quality services.
- This past year, **277** new donors assisted with Youth & Family Services' efforts to support children and their families in being capable, caring, and contributing members of the community. In addition, **62** new donors contributed to the YFS Foundation.
- The 2nd Annual Big John Lintz Golf Tournament—a memorial tournament held in honor of John Lintz—took place on June 26, 2023. Thanks to an outpouring of support, the tournament was a huge success and raised **\$36,687.59!** These funds will support an endowment through the YFS Foundation that will benefit YFS programs in perpetuity.
- In January, YFS Foundation staff and supporters toasted a man who left behind a legacy of sharing his passion and resources with the youth of western South Dakota. Before he passed away in 1983, Dr. Ray E. Lemley commissioned a special trust fund that would annually provide monetary support to YFS programs. This year, 30 years after setting up the fund, Dr. Lemley's trust reached a momentous milestone of having distributed more than **\$1 million**. At this year's annual memorial luncheon, YFS received a check for **\$28,312** from the Lemley Memorial Trust.
- In 2014, Dale and Jackie Fullerton donated a three-acre plot of land that would become YFS' Fullerton Farm. Fullerton Farm is part of YFS' Garden Education Project which is intended to help children and their families achieve better health through increased access to and consumption of nutritious foods. In December 2021, Dale and Jackie's children—Mark, Jeff, and Joan—donated a custom 1953 Chevrolet 3100 truck to YFS. The truck was raffled to raise funds that were used to create an endowment through Youth & Family Services Foundation. This endowment will provide consistent and ongoing financial support for YFS' Fullerton Farm and Garden Education Project. This past August, in conjunction with McPherson Auction & Realty's Kool Deadwood Nights event, the pickup went to its new home. In total, the truck raffle raised **\$118,731** through ticket sales and other donations. This gift honors Dale and Jackie's legacy of supporting children served by YFS and ensures that current and future generations will have access to fresh produce and an increased awareness about nutrition and gardening. We appreciate Mark, Jeff, and Joan for honoring their parents with this wonderful gift.

Honorariums and Memorials

Honorariums

Darcie Decker
David Emery
Doug and Sherry Fluke
Dr. David Godbe
Scott Lynn
Akira Okouchi
Bob and Cydnie Paulson
Dr. Ron Reed
Sybil Rounds
Dr. Taylor and Katie Slingsby
Tom and Sharon Warner

Memorials

Blanche Biernbaum
Margaret Close
Kathy Cordes
Scott Decker
Mark Deets
Julie Jensen
Julie Larson
Linnie Lea
John Lintz
Eleanor Milberg
Jackie Moore

Sr. Jane Frances Mullaney
Marlene Perry
Norman Peterson
Monty Schaefer
Frank Simpson
Terry Whiting
Phil Zacher

Alumni of the Year

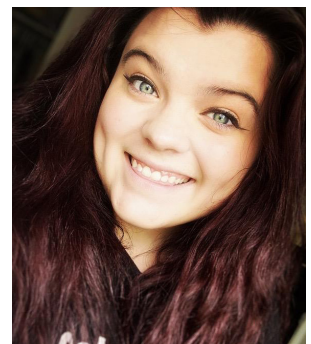


Santee Burnette
Rapid City Police Department
YFS Girls Inc. of Rapid City/Health Connections

Santee's mom enrolled in her YFS' Girls Inc. of Rapid City so she could interact with other children and access opportunities the program had to offer. "We didn't have a lot growing up. Girls Inc. had a lot of fun excursions and field trips, which I really enjoyed as a kid," Santee expressed. In addition to being a member at YFS' Girls Inc., Santee was enrolled in YFS' Health Connections, an advocacy program for girls. Health Connections staff worked with her mother to ensure Santee's health needs were being met. "My mom always had to work, so they would take me to doctors' appointments or other things," she shared. "I became really close with a couple of the ladies that would transport me," she recalled with a smile. Santee revealed the skills she acquired at Girls Inc. would help her later in life as a detective. "The skills I learned at YFS were taking initiative and learning how to be kind and be there for somebody. Those things shaped me to really be able to do this job in a great way."

Haley Goodhart
Amazon, Freelance Artist
YFS Girls Inc. of Rapid City

Haley began attending Girls Inc. of Rapid City at a young age. As an only child, it was important to Haley's mother that she be in a place where she felt safe and could socialize and make friends. "YFS helped me and my family quite a bit throughout the years," shared Haley. "After-school care was hard to find. Busing from school was hard to find. My mom worked full time and was a single mom," Haley explained. During Haley's time at Girls Inc., she learned about teamwork, friendship, sportsmanship, and leadership. "I learned how to be a more independent person," she affirmed. "Without sports, without friends, without having that socialization, it would have been really difficult growing up. Because of Girls Inc. I was able to break out of my shell and kind of be that goofy person I am today."



Capital Campaign Update

Frederick Douglass said, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." Based on our 58 years of experience working with children and families, we agree.

Youth & Family Services (YFS) operates nine programs that work together to deliver comprehensive outreach services to underserved children and families. These services provide high quality early childhood education, child care, afterschool and summer youth development programming with academic support and enrichment, intensive case management for at-risk youth, parent engagement opportunities, parenting education, mental health counseling and trauma treatment, nutrition and health advocacy services, relationship education programming, financial literacy and coaching services, and violence and substance abuse prevention. Most of our educational programs focus on hands-on learning.

Several years ago, we realized we had outgrown our facilities. Programs were at capacity and many had waiting lists. Program offices were spread throughout town, making intra-agency referrals more difficult for clients. There were long waiting lists for YFS services related to health advocacy, counseling, child care, mentoring, tutoring, and after-school programs. YFS conducted a community assessment; met with law enforcement, school personnel, and other youth-serving organizations; hosted listening sessions and talked to youth to help identify gaps in services. Lack of infant/toddler care, programming for middle school youth, healthy relationships, methamphetamine and alcohol use by youth, and food insecurity were key issues that needed to be addressed. At this point, it was determined that it was necessary to expand our East Adams facility to help meet these needs.

The YFS Foundation Board of Directors accepted the challenge of raising \$13,994,118 for an expansion project that would add an additional 67,525 sq. ft. of indoor program space and 32,794 sq. ft. of playground/outdoor learning space to our facility. We are grateful to have been able to secure New Markets Tax Credits for this project and are deeply appreciative of the gifts we have received from our local community.

As of June 2023, YFS has successfully secured the pledges needed to fulfill our financial obligations for this project. We would like to thank Gary Brown and Dan Warren for co-chairing the Facility Expansion Project Steering Committee as well as committee members: Jeff Fullerton, Susan Hency, Michelle Lintz, Ron Reed, and John Way. Their time and persevering efforts made this expansion a reality. Dan Warren shared, "This was never about a building. It's about the wonderful opportunities that children will have access to within the building. We have a thoughtful, compassionate community that recognizes investing in children benefits us all."



Photo credit: Cody Lere Photography

With Gratitude

YFS continues to work tirelessly towards meeting the needs of children and families in western South Dakota. This would be impossible without the support of the hundreds of donors, volunteers, community partners, civic leaders, parents, and grantees who have helped YFS provide quality, effective, impactful services during this past fiscal year. It is because of this support that we are able to assist children and their families in being capable, caring, and contributing members of the community.