

# Manatee Children's Services Annual Report



  
MANATEE  
CHILDREN'S  
SERVICES  
db  
MCS Child  
Advocacy Center

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# A Letter from Chief Executive Officer Melinda Thompson



Dear Friends and Supporters,

As I reflect on this past year, I am humbled by the resilience of the children and families we serve and the unwavering dedication of our team. Every day, our mission calls us to provide safety, stability, and healing for children affected by abuse and neglect. Thanks to your support, we are able to answer that call. In the nearly 30 years I have been with MCS, I have witnessed both incredible challenges and extraordinary progress.

I am proud to carry forward the vision of our founder, Carol Chamberlain. In 1977, Carol recognized a desperate community need and acted with courage, opening the first emergency shelter for abused children in Manatee County. Her legacy of compassion and determination remains the foundation of all we do today.

We continue to see Carol's vision in action through our prevention, intervention, treatment, and residential programs. Children who arrive afraid and uncertain discover not only safety, but also healing, hope, and a sense of belonging. Families struggling with cycles of trauma find the tools and resilience to create stronger futures and keep their children safe.

These transformations are the direct result of the foundation she built and the continued support of people like you. Looking ahead, we remain committed to strengthening our facilities, expanding collaborations, and sustaining our programs so future generations of children will always find hope here.

None of this would be possible without your generosity and belief that every child deserves to be safe and to thrive. Together, we will continue breaking the cycle of abuse and honoring the vision that Carol Chamberlain began nearly five decades ago.



# Our Mission

Manatee Children's Services is dedicated to preventing child abuse, restoring healing, and strengthening all children and their families through advocacy, treatment, and shelter.

We protect and enhance the lives of children and families in Manatee County by preventing first-time or repeat abuse through educating and supporting families, intervening after allegations of abuse, providing therapeutic treatment for children who have experienced trauma, and housing abused foster children through short-term and long-term residential care. Founded in 1977 as the county's first emergency shelter for abused children, Our agency has grown into a full-service Child Advocacy Center serving more than 16,000 children and families each year.

Our vision is to break the cycle of child abuse. Through this continuum of nationally accredited programs, we work to create lasting stability for children and families and build a community where every child is safe and supported.

## Board of Directors

**William Tokajer**  
President

**Jesse Carr**  
Vice President

**David Reali**  
Treasurer

**LaVerne Routh**  
Secretary

**Daniel Winkelman**

**Lauren Benson**

**Ric Davis**

**Henry Lawrence**

**Emily Jerrehian**

**Kelli Martinez**

**David Todd**

**Vanessa Castro**

**Ed Nicholas**  
(Lifetime Honorary  
Member)

**Douglas "Bemis" Smith**

**Nathalie Posthuma**

# Our Leadership



**Melinda Thompson**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Cheryl Andrews, LCSW**  
Chief Operating Officer



**Julia Robertson**  
Chief Financial Officer



**Krista Post**  
Development Director



**Celeste Martens, LCSW**  
Clinical Services  
Director



**Kimberly Griffin, MSW**  
Child Protection Team  
Coordinator



**Colleen Duffy**  
Residential Director



**Kelli Geary**  
Training Coordinator



**Debbie Ostrander**  
Human Resources  
Coordinator



**Nadine Knapp**  
Parenting Services  
Coordinator



**Jocina Newsome**  
Prevention Services  
Coordinator



**Danielle Foster**  
Quality Assurance  
Coordinator

# Program Impact: Intervention Services



Medical evaluations

276

Forensic interviews

302

Manatee Children's Services' Child Protection Team (CPT), funded since the 1980s, brings together a multidisciplinary group of medical professionals, partnering agencies, child welfare specialists, and forensic interviewers to evaluate suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. The team conducts specialized medical exams and non-leading interviews to identify safety concerns and ensure children's voices are heard. Based on their findings, CPT provides expert recommendations and collaborates with investigators, courts, and service providers to protect children and strengthen family environments, playing a critical role in intervention and prevention.

Interagency  
therapy referrals

86



# Program Impact: Residential Services

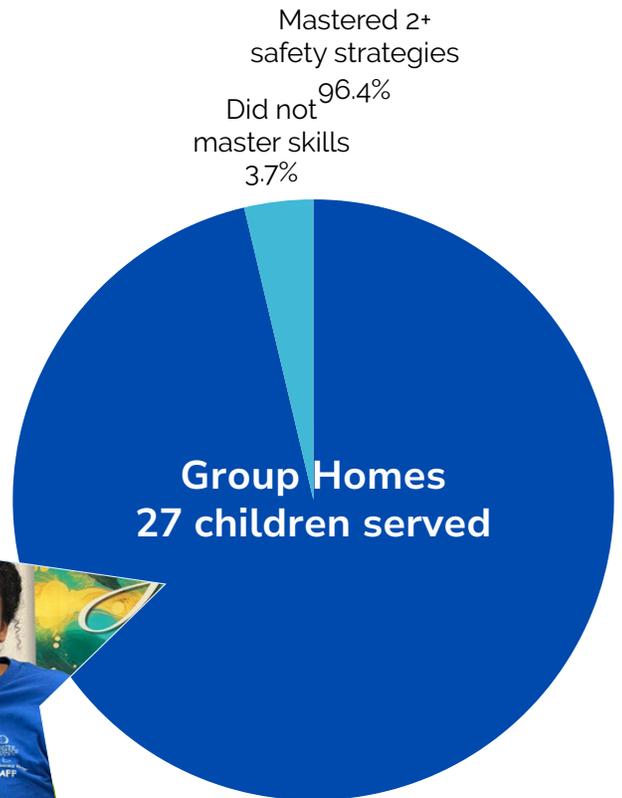
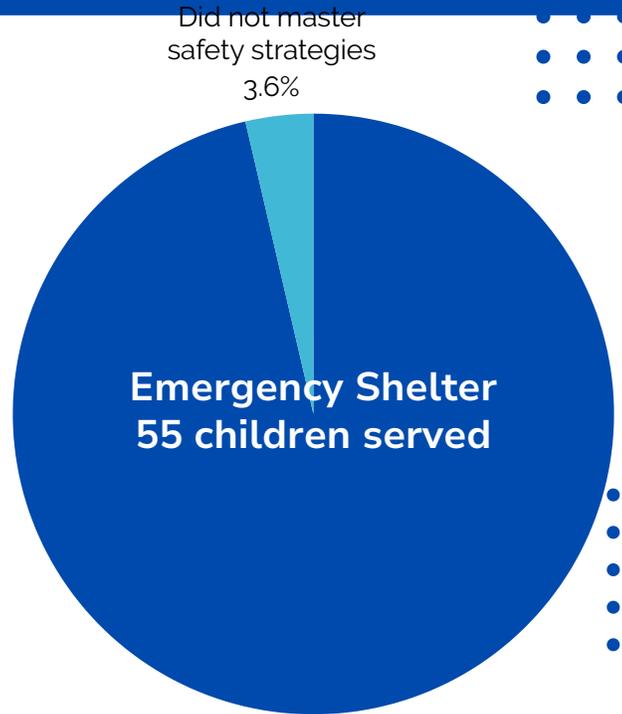


Children Served

83



Our residential program provides safe shelter for children removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. The Emergency Shelter offers immediate care, including counseling, advocacy, and academic support, and remains the only emergency shelter in Manatee County. Our licensed long-term group homes, all specially certified for human trafficking survivors and at-risk youth, provide stability and life skills training. Success is measured by children demonstrating personal safety strategies and independent living skills that help prevent future abuse.



Mastered 2+ independent living skills 96.3%

# Program Impact: Treatment Services

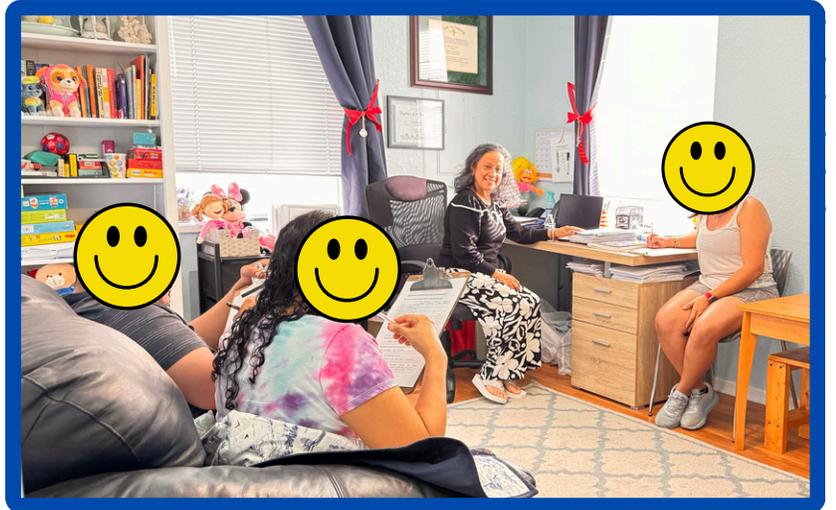


Children Served

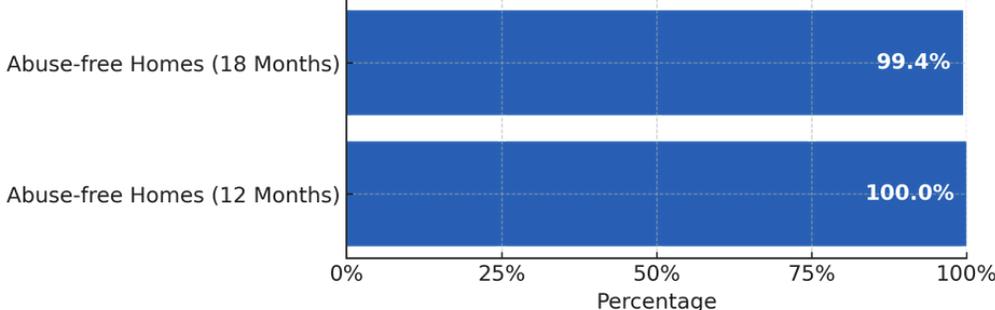
178



Since 1993, Manatee Children's Services has provided specialized mental health treatment for child abuse victims and their families using Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). Through the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) program and the Sexual Abuse Treatment Program (SATP), children and families receive trauma-informed, family-centered care from highly qualified therapists. Our Non-Offending Caregiver (NOC) groups offer vital support to caregivers raising children who have experienced sexual abuse. Children in treatment learn to recognize safety threats, resist grooming behaviors, and use their voices to report abuse, while families gain tools to heal, break the cycle of abuse, and build safer futures.



## Therapeutic Education Success Rates



# Program Impact: Prevention Services



We offer a variety of prevention programs with evidence-based curricula designed to protect children and support families. Grandparents as Parents (GAP) works with families in kinship care, focusing on keeping children safe and stable in their relative caregivers' homes. Program success is measured by the children's ability to remain safely in these placements and the caregivers' ability to maintain a stable, safe environment.

KIDS Personal Safety provides elementary children in Manatee County with personal safety education and assists schools in addressing bullying and abuse. Success is gauged through delivery of presentations (outreach) and follow-up documentation if and when abuse is reported.

TRUTH (Teens Reaching Understanding Through Healthy Relationships) empowers youth aged 10 to 17 to make healthy decisions and prevent teen pregnancy, as children born to teen mothers are more prone to child abuse and family instability. Success is measured by the ability to maintain a pregnancy-free adolescence.

Finally, BRIC/FPRP (Building Resilience in Communities/Family Parenting and Reunification Program) supports at-risk families through caregiver education, skill-building, and guidance; these programs measure success by parents' adoption of nurturing parenting practices and strengthened family stability.

Collectively, our prevention programs reflect MCS's commitment to fostering safe, nurturing environments for children and families and our commitment to breaking the cycle of child abuse.

Children Served

13,822



Celebrating the gift  
of family 2025

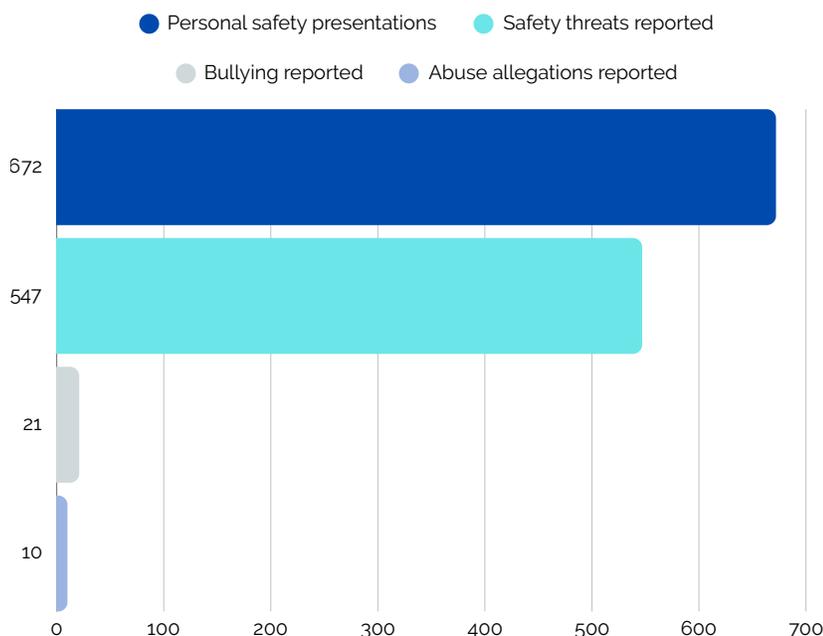


## TRUTH (Teens Reaching Understanding Through Healthy Relationships)



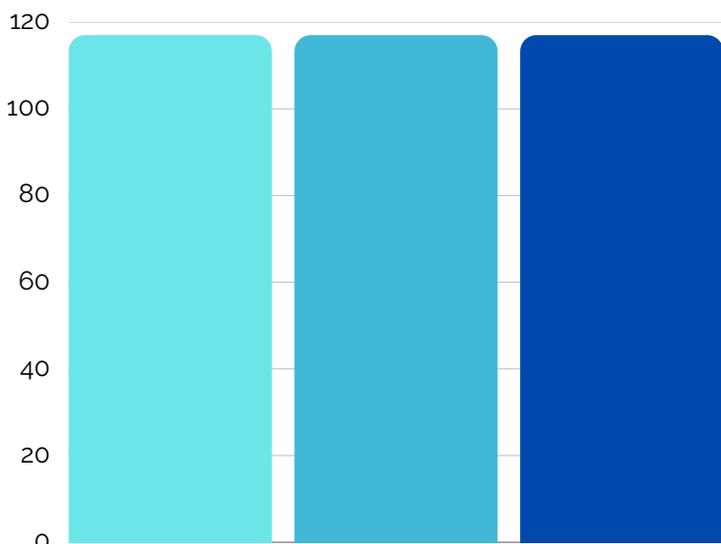
84 youth served

## KIDS Personal Safety



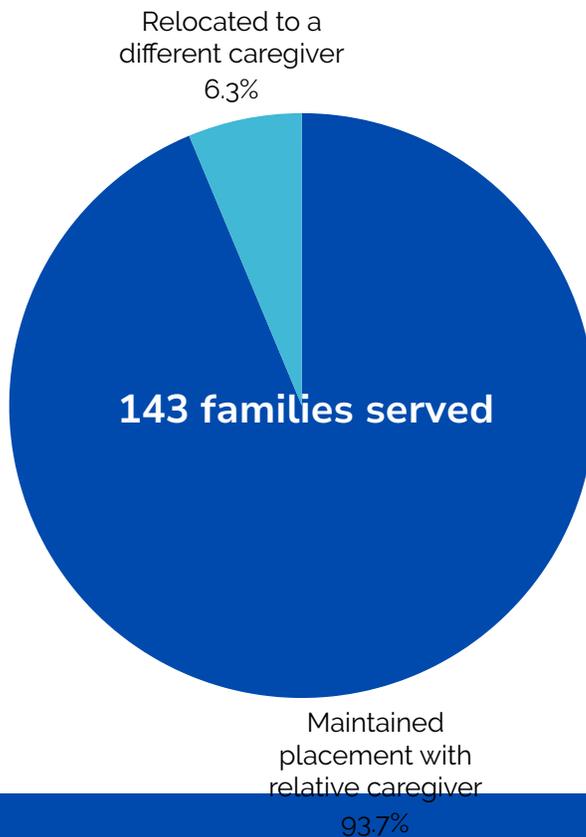
13,474 children served

- Abuse-free homes (6 months)
- Abuse-free homes (12 months)
- Abuse-free homes (18 months)



BRIC/FPRP (96% success rate)  
121 at-risk parents served

## Grandparents as Parents



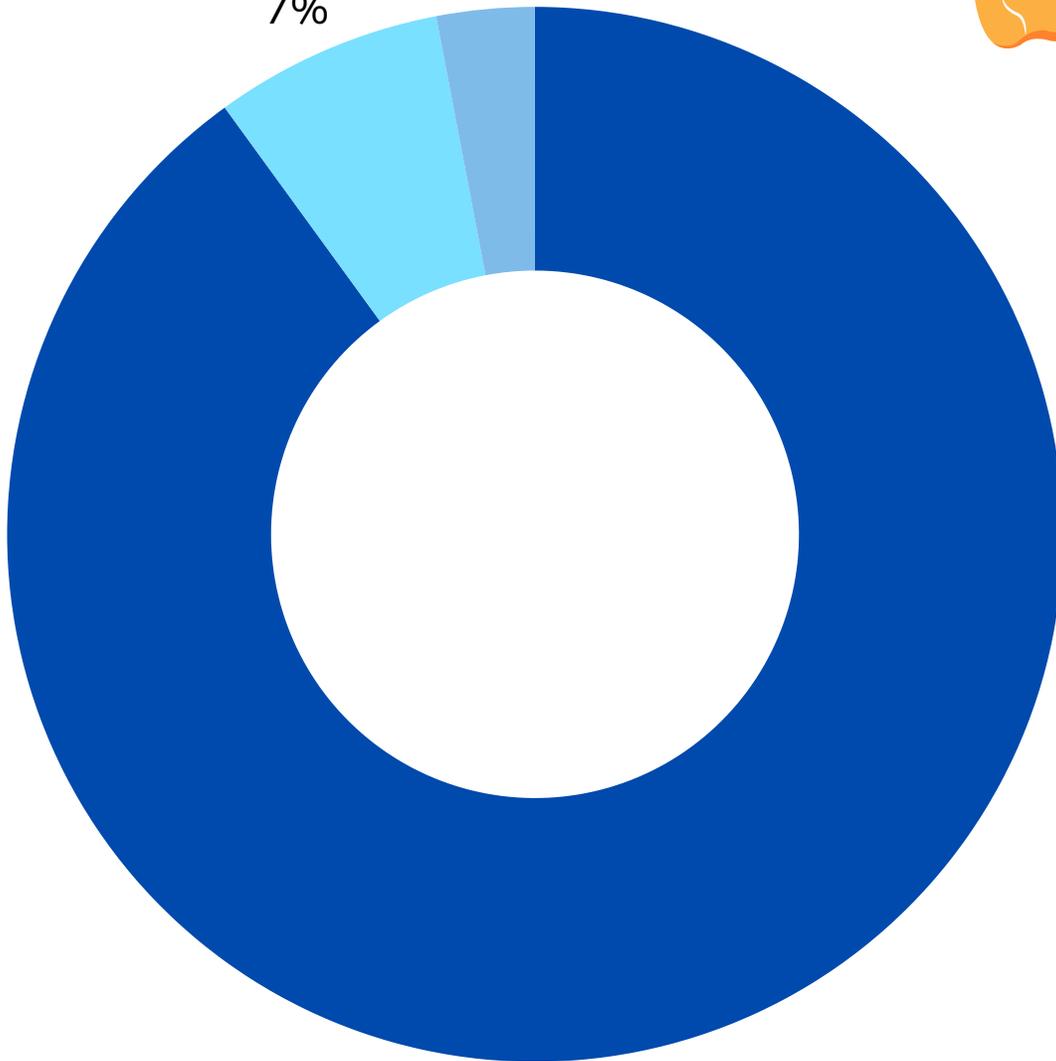


# Financials: Income



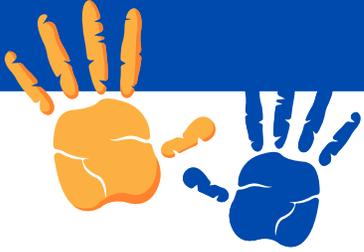
Contributions  
7%

In-kind, special  
events, & other  
3%



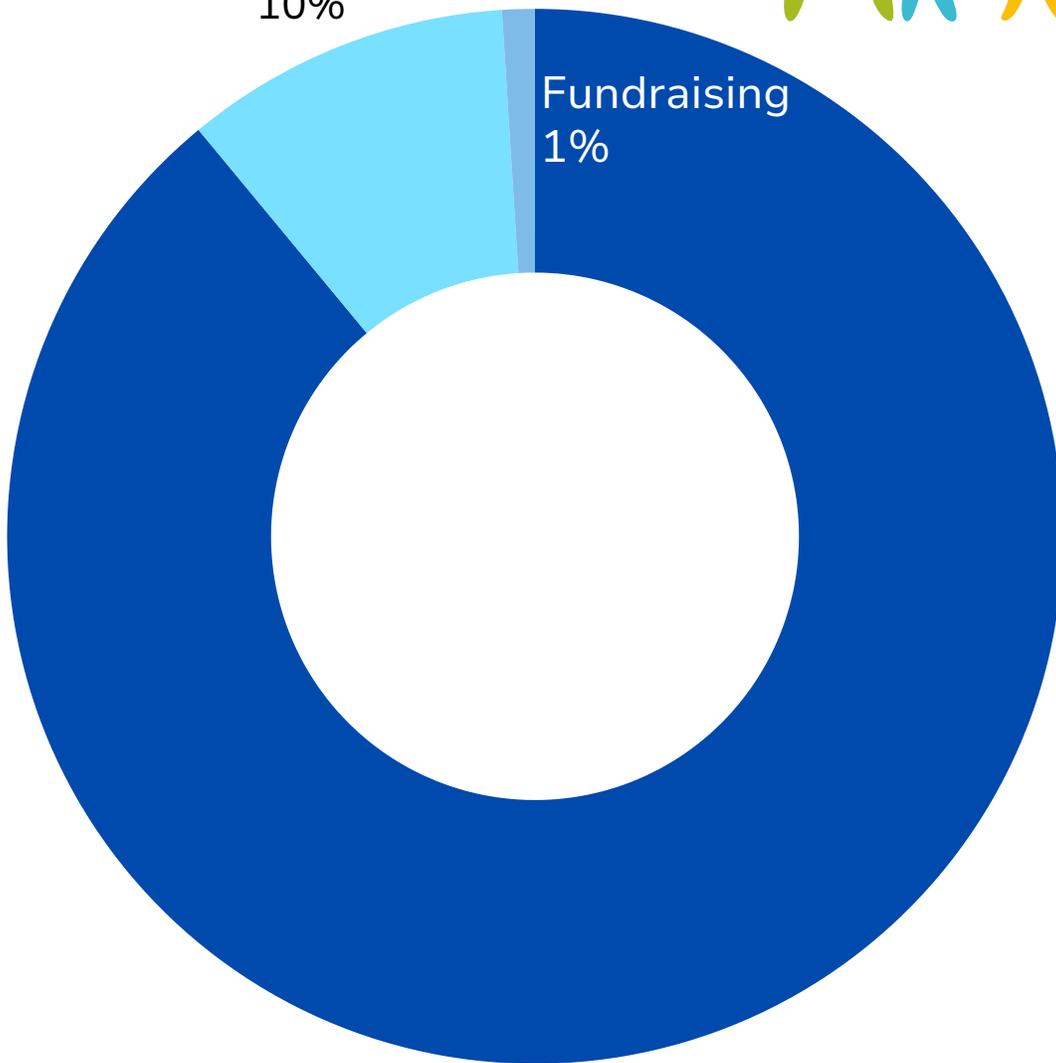
Federal, state, &  
county grants  
90%

# Financials: Expenses



Management &  
general support  
10%

Fundraising  
1%



Program services  
89%



# Our Year in Review



This year, Manatee Children's Services demonstrated resilience and growth, even in the aftermath of back-to-back hurricanes Helene and Milton. At the Emergency Shelter/Our Place Group Home, we completed a full kitchen and laundry room remodel, funded by Manatee County Government, enhancing safety, efficiency, and comfort for the children and families we serve. We also concluded our first capital campaign, "Welcome to Our House," supported by the William G. and Marie Selby Foundation, Bishop-Parker Foundation, City of Bradenton, Manatee Community Foundation, the Barancik Foundation, and generous private donors, which allowed us to move our adjacent Child Protection Team into our main building, uniting all agency programs under one roof. Following this, our annual Holiday Project brought the community together to ensure every child in our programs received gifts for the season. To strengthen our residential program, we added a dual-purpose maintenance truck/transportation vehicle, funded by the Bishop-Parker Foundation, improving our ability to respond quickly to daily needs and emergencies. During Child Abuse Prevention Month, MCS engaged the community in awareness and prevention initiatives, reinforcing our ongoing commitment to child safety. Despite the challenges of severe storms, Our agency continued to advance its mission, ensuring safe, nurturing environments for children and families.



Agency referrals  
made:  
322



# Special Recognition

Bishop-Parker Foundation

Bradenton Police Department

Service Club of Manatee County



Nancy McCabe

Manatee County Whiskey Society

Tracy Barnett

Community Foundation of Sarasota County

Berlin, Patten, Ebling Attorneys at Law

Manatee Chamber Foundation

Brenda Carr

Bradentucky Bombers

Jay Burchfield

VLJ Hope Fund

Jeff Gerhard

Sisterhood For Good

Gerard and Sydney Barkholz

Wawa Foundation

Rosedale Ladies Golf Association

Walmart Foundation

William G. and Marie Selby Foundation

Longboat Key Chamber of Commerce

Brenton Webster

Longboat Key Firefighter's Association #4174

Manatee County Sheriff's Office

Goddard School of Sarasota

Mary Jane Brantley

BNI Business Focus

SATO Real Estate

HCMS Partners, LLC

Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation

Woodruff & Sons

The Lakewood Ranch Community Fund

Sanctuary Cove Community

Aqua CARES Foundation

Early Learning Coalition of Manatee

James Rollo

Wells Fargo Foundation

Manatee County Government

Daryl and Suzie Brown

Lance Hoeltke

Michael Castranuevo

BNI Key Referrals

US Health Advisors

Commercial Plastering

Thank you

# How to Help

Your support makes our mission possible. Every gift, whether large or small, helps us protect children, strengthen families, and build a safer community. Donations allow us to respond quickly in times of crisis, provide essential care and prevention services, and ensure every child has the opportunity to grow up in a safe, nurturing environment. By giving, you are not only sustaining our programs today but also investing in a brighter, safer future for generations to come.



## What you can do:

Donate monthly & annually to support critical programs

Volunteer your time for community outreach

Host a charitable event to promote our mission

Designate MCS for planned/legacy giving to ensure sustainability

Contribute in-kind donation items to our children and families

[www.mcsfl.com/donate](http://www.mcsfl.com/donate)

