Unprecedented! That is the only word that can singularly describe 2020 for One Hope United.

At the beginning of this year, we embraced a bold enthusiasm as we set out to commemorate 125 years of continuous service. Our enthusiasm may have been dampened as a public health crisis swept the nation early in 2020, but our commitment to the mission was unfettered. Just as the pandemic took hold, we completed a new three-year strategic plan that will focus our endeavors on providing quality services, retaining a highly skilled workforce, developing innovative programs, and establishing a culture of philanthropy.

Since our legacy of serving children and families began in 1895, we have certainly faced challenges. Yet, this year we found ourselves needing to be more nimble and adaptable than ever before. In the midst of the coronavirus we continued to grow and expand services in Illinois and Florida to serve more. And the needs in the communities we serve increased throughout the year. The thousands of families we support each day – already underresourced – found themselves struggling to stay ahead as they experienced an increase in stresses due to employment instability, school closures, and more limited access to basic needs. Children remained in our care longer than usual as milestone events such as adoption ceremonies transitioned to a virtual environment.

Through it all was an incomparable team of resilient staff and volunteers – Hope Members, as we are known. Our workforce of nearly 800 found new ways to do their jobs, all the while focused on the health and wellbeing of the children we are called to protect and support. Closures, quarantines, and social distancing required a tremendous level of flexibility. Fundamental to our work are relationships with those we serve. Many Hope Members rapidly adopted new technologies to carry out their work. Many others worked long hours in residential sites due to staffing restrictions and limitations. We salute each and every one of them for going above and beyond in service to our mission.

When we started this monumental year, we didn’t realize just how historic it would be. But we persevered, we served, and we did find time to celebrate our 125 years! Despite its challenges, our strong management team led us to end the fiscal year in a solid financial position. In this 2020 Annual Impact Report, you’ll learn more about the year’s accomplishments and the people who thrived this year because we remained undeterred from our anniversary theme – a legacy of life without limits!

The Legacy of Ermit L. Finch

After losing both of his parents and experiencing inhumane living conditions at an orphanage in Arkansas, Ermit L. Finch arrived at One Hope United’s Lake Villa residential home in 1948. Ermit went on to build a successful business career, and he became the first former client to serve on One Hope United’s Board. One Hope United created the Ermit L. Finch Impact Award in 2015 to honor his legacy of service, and named the Lake Villa campus for him in 2019. Ermit passed away in 2020 at the age of 85.

An Unprecedented Year...

Dr. Charles A. Montorio-Archer
President & CEO

Jim “RJ” Young
President, Board of Directors

United In Hope,
125 Years of Life Without Limits...

October 8, 1895
The original Chicago Baptist Orphanage is chartered. The first house opens on Washington Street in Downers Grove, Illinois.

April 28, 1913
The organization’s name changes to Central Baptist Children’s Home. The organization expands to include four homes in Downers Grove, Berwyn, Chicago, & Maywood, Illinois (pictured).

1940’s
Life Director Ermit L. Finch is brought to the Lake Villa campus. Ermit moves from a home in Arkansas following the death of his parents.

1950’s
The organization continues to expand Early Learning & Community Services. Under the leadership of Don Mertic, new Community Support Services continue to be acquired & expanded.

1990’s
The organization changes its name to Kids Hope United.

2004
The organization becomes One Hope United.

2020
One Hope United celebrates 125 years and a rich future of lasting impact.

2020 + BEYOND
In 2020, we served 5,407 clients in our CBFS services, 2,587 families and children in our Florida programs, 2,168 clients in our Early Learning services, and 141 children and youth in our Residential and Day Treatment programs.

93% of children served in our Extensive Community Home Outreach program remained in the care of their parent or guardian.

86% of children served met Teaching Standard Gold benchmarks for cognitive development, indicating they were ready for – and would be successful in – kindergarten.

92% of youth enrolled at the CARE Therapeutic Day School pursued higher education, a vocational program, or obtained employment 6 months after completing the program.
Renee Zoll often sees families at some of the most difficult moments of their lives. Her perspective as a Comprehensive Community-Based Youth Services (CCBYS) Supervisor allows her to be there for families in these incredibly emotional situations, and help them view the moment as an opportunity for growth and change. CCBYS provides 24-hour responses to homeless, runaway and “locked out” youth who are between the ages of 11-17.

Renee Zoll supervises One Hope United’s CCBYS program in Southern Illinois. Youth and families can request to participate in services or they can be referred through law enforcement, community partners, or schools. After a crisis has settled, Renee assigns a therapist to work one-on-one with the family for at least 90 days. Youth can also be referred for non-crisis services.

Renee’s goal for the CCBYS program is always to increase the number of families reunified, and to help stabilize families. CCBYS is structured to promote family success, which is perhaps most evident in the fact that families choose to work with One Hope United’s therapists – participation in the program is not mandatory. These families are open to change, and willing to listen to each other.

“Often, families don’t know this program exists until they need it,” Renee said. “If your family member was struggling, you would want them to have access to the best services possible.”

Renee recently shared about a mother and teenage daughter who demonstrate the outcomes the CCBYS program can have. Several months ago, Kim*, who had been fighting regularly with her mom, Lisa*, ran away from home. She was found by police 5 days later. After speaking with officers at the station for about 15 minutes, Kim agreed to return home. Kim and Lisa then worked with OHU’s Case Manager, Dora Riley, to develop constructive communication strategies that would help them navigate conflicts in a calmer way.

“It can be very difficult to get a teenager and parent on the same page,” Dora shared. “Parents usually want to ‘fix’ or ‘change’ the youth, and the youth wants the parent to change or leave them alone.” Kim and Lisa also struggled with each other’s expectations following a fight. Kim wanted to take time alone to calm down, while Lisa pushed Kim to try to resolve the disagreement right away.

As they progressed through therapy sessions with Dora, Lisa began to understand Kim’s triggers, and slowed her responses down so Kim had time and space to manage her emotions. Lisa recognized she needed to view Kim’s attitude as a response to a trigger, and not to take the response personally. Lisa also recognized she needed to stop “pushing” Kim into managing a disagreement according to her own expectations.

Kim quickly realized she didn’t want to run away. She also eventually recognized the value in looking at some conflicts that arose often with her mom as areas to work on and talk about rather than run from.

At the end of their 90 days, Dora utilized a tool called the Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI™) to evaluate Lisa and Kim’s progress. The YASI is a juvenile risk assessment tool that measures risk, needs, and protective factors in at-risk and juvenile justice-involved youth. Dora determined that Kim and Lisa were doing much better as a family unit overall, and Kim was no longer at risk of running away. “This family was open and specific enough that we could share targeted strategies to help them change their relationship,” Dora said. “They were able to hear us and accept help. This may seem like a simple or easy thing, but it’s not.”

Dora also shared an insight she’s learned from working with hundreds of families struggling to navigate conflict. She’s found that “progress towards building relationships begins when everyone is willing to work on their own struggles instead of ‘changing’ the other person.”

Dora and Renee are both passionate about being there for families like Kim and Lisa who are working to stay together. Renee said, “When families meet us for the first time, it’s often at one of the worst moments of their lives. If we’re at the police station, everyone’s in crisis mode. As objective third-party outsiders, we’re able to share what might happen in a week, 3 months, 6 months and beyond if they utilize certain strategies.”

Though the pandemic has presented unique challenges to their ability to provide services, Renee and her team have worked hard to identify solutions. “We’ve found that it’s incredibly difficult to respond to a crisis by phone, rather than being in-person at the police station,” Renee said. Renee’s counselors have also been unable to respond to situations in-person a handful of times, because a family member has tested positive for COVID-19. Her team is currently utilizing a mix of video conferencing and in-person services and doing their best to keep team members safe.

“These are really valuable services for at-risk teenagers, whether they ran away from home or their parent is saying they can’t come home,” Renee concluded. “We need to make sure programs like this can continue, so that when a family does need them, they’re available.”

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.
COMMUNITY BASED FAMILY SERVICES
SUPPORTING & STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

Central Baptist begins providing CCBYS in Illinois. The agency expands this program and for a time is the largest provider of CCBYS in the state.

(Pictured) Miriam Brown, Caseworker (left) and first Central Baptist foster mother, Mrs. Garroway (right), 1957.

Community Based Family Services helps children and families lead healthy and fulfilled lives with counseling, youth and family services, foster care, and adoption.

1957

1985

COMMUNITY BASED FAMILY SERVICES

Central Baptist begins providing CCBYS in Illinois.
The agency expands this program and for a time is the largest provider of CCBYS in the state.

125 YEARS OF LIFE WITHOUT LIMITS

5407 FAMILIES SERVED
COMMUNITY BASED FAMILY SERVICES

Screening Assessment & Support Services & Adult Mobile Crisis Response

Screening Assessment & Support Services (SASS) is an intensive mental health program designed to provide crisis stabilization, pre-admission screening, assessment, and treatment of any child who may be at risk of psychiatric hospitalization and who is eligible for public funding under any program funded by one of three collaborating departments (IDHS, IHFS, and IDCFS). Services are child-centered, family-focused, community-based, and culturally competent. They occur in the least restrictive setting and include multi-systems.

“The staff stayed in contact with my child throughout the COVID pandemic. They have helped my child feel better during a tough time. I am looking forward to our therapist working with my child more!” – Client

1501
CLIENTS SERVED

4.74/5.00
CLIENT SATISFACTION

Intensive Placement Services

Intensive Placement Stabilization (IPS) provides intensive support to high-risk children in foster care to stabilize placements and prevent entry into higher levels of care. This program operates in Cook County, Charleston, Chicago, Collinsville, Effingham, and Mt. Vernon, Illinois. IPS services cover over 32 counties in Illinois. IPS is a federal grant awarded to IDCFS to improve permanency for youth in care. IPS is designed to help youth and family members learn how to better manage stress, learn effective emotion regulation, and thus help improve relationships between family members.

“Our case manager has been incredibly supportive during a difficult time for our family. They have been gentle, patient, instructive, and kind. They also helped our kids articulate their feelings, and encouraged the adults to keep the kids as our central focus.” – Client

418
CLIENTS SERVED

4.70/5.00
CLIENT SATISFACTION

Extensive Community Home Outreach

Extensive Community Home Outreach (ECO) offers intensive home-based support to at-risk families to prevent children from entering more intensive placement services such as foster care or DOC. This program operates in Cook County. ECHO is a family-focused, child-centered, in-home treatment service working with Title XX intact families residing in Cook County. The target population is children ages 0-18 who are not youth in care. Services are provided to families and children who are at risk of being removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect.

“The staff has been there for me and my family through some stressful times. When I didn’t know which way to turn and everything was out of order, we worked through the situation together, and I feel that we will succeed.” – Client

143
CLIENTS SERVED

4.74/5.00
CLIENT SATISFACTION

Outpatient Counseling

One Hope United’s Outpatient Counseling services assist children, adults, and families in a time of need. Services are offered both in-home and through a more traditional outpatient approach. Clinical specialties include working with issues of acute stress reactions and reactions to trauma, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, school problems, behavioral problems, parenting, and family conflict. In addition, the clinical staff focuses on the systemic issues that are inherent in cases involving children and families.

“We could not be any happier with the One Hope United staff member we worked with. They were always pleasant, professional, and wonderful to work with. They have definitely made a difference in all of our lives!” – Caregiver

454
CLIENTS SERVED

4.64/5.00
CLIENT SATISFACTION

Foster Care Services

Foster Care services provide safe, secure, and nurturing homes for children who have been separated from the care of their biological families. While many of these children are victims of neglect and abuse, they have great potential to thrive in a nurturing environment. One Hope United also provides services to biological parents as they work to resolve the issues that led to the family’s need for out of home care. Additionally, One Hope United recruits, trains, and licenses homes of individuals wishing to become foster parents.

“The One Hope United case manager is so amazing! She always takes the time to answer my questions and is so prompt. She has really made my experience all around so much easier!” – Client

857
CLIENTS SERVED

4.51/5.00
CLIENT SATISFACTION

Intact Family Services

Intact Family Services maintain and strengthen family units by providing in-home services designed to prevent children from entering the foster care system. The program provides intensive in-home case management as well as 24-hour response to emergencies. Additional services include linking families with substance abuse treatment programs and in-home counseling. Services are offered in Charleston, Centralia, Chicago, Collinsville, Effingham, Gurnee, Springfield, and Olney, Illinois. Intact families are looking to expand in areas including Joliet and McHenry in the next year.

“My One Hope United case manager is one of the nicest people I have talked to. I find it very easy to talk with them, especially if I have any questions. I give them all the credit when closing our case. Thank you and God bless.” – Client

1,150
CLIENTS SERVED

4.68/5.00
CLIENT SATISFACTION
Supplemental Services

Supplemental Services aims to strengthen families who are preparing for reunification following the out-of-home placement of at least one child. The program also seeks to support parents’ efforts to provide a safe and nurturing environment for their children, reduce the occurrence of out-of-home placements, and assist with the reunification of the family with their children. Services offered include in-home training, including appropriate childcare and home management designed to improve daily living, and supervision of visits between parents and children who are placed in out-of-home care.

“The One Hope United visiting schedule works great, and if there is any complication in scheduling, they are very quick to figure out the best solution that works for everyone.” – Client

Comprehensive Community-Based Youth Services

Comprehensive Community-Based Youth Services (CCBYS) is designed to divert youth from the juvenile justice and/or child welfare systems. The program provides 24-hour crisis responses to homeless, runaway and “locked out” youth. Home-based counseling is offered to help reduce the home/community issues which precipitated the crisis. In addition to crisis services, staff works closely with local schools and community agencies to maximize resources available to at-risk youth. Short-term outreach-based counseling is available to families in the community where the youth is at risk of out-of-home placement. Aggression Replacement Training (ART), an evidence-based anger management and life skills group process, is provided as a component of service. Services offered include in-home family counseling, assessment of family’s strengths and needs, assistance in accessing community resources, coordination with school/community resources, and around-the-clock emergency response. The program serves the following locations in Illinois: Effingham, Gurnee, Mt. Vernon, and Olney.

“The OHU staff member we worked with has been the most responsive and involved out of anyone at any social services organization we have worked with. They have always kept awesome communication with us and helped us through many things. I believe they are one of the greatest assets your organization has.” – Caregiver

Foster Grandparent Program

The One Hope United Foster Grandparent Program offers seniors age 55 and older the opportunity to serve as mentors, tutors and loving caregivers for children and youth. Volunteers serve in a variety of locations throughout the community, including schools, after-school programs, Head Start, childcare centers, and youth centers. The personal attention offered by the Foster Grandparents helps youth grow, gain confidence, and succeed in their areas of interest. In return, Foster Grandparents receive the joy of building strong relationships with youth in their communities. The program operates in Mt. Vernon and Springfield, Illinois.

“The One Hope United visiting schedule works great, and if there is any complication in scheduling, they are very quick to figure out the best solution that works for everyone.” – Client

Intensive Family Services

The Intensive Family Services (IFS) program is an intensive treatment model designed to address multiple determinates of serious anti-social behavior displayed by youth in the justice system. Counselors work with youth in individual sessions which are supported by weekly parent meetings. This treatment approach views individuals being nested within a complex network of interconnected systems that encompass individual, family and extra familial (school, neighborhood, peer) factors. The ultimate objective of this program is to stabilize the youth and their family so that out-of-home care is prevented through the formal state child welfare and/or juvenile justice system. The individual counseling program works from a strength-based perspective assisting the youth to identify and eliminate barriers that inhibit them from consistently engaging in pro-social behaviors. The program operates in Chicago, IL.

Youth Diversion Program

The One Hope United Youth Diversion Program (YDP) provides community-based counseling to youth at risk of out-of-home placement because of situations like truancy and runaway. The in-home services are child-centered but family-focused. Supportive services are provided to youth/families over a period of three to six months. Services offered include: a comprehensive risk and needs assessment before developing an individualized treatment plan; solution-based in-home weekly family meetings; collaboration, networking, and advocacy for early intervention; referrals to community resources; parent education; crisis intervention; and advocacy. The Youth Diversion Program is available to youth ages 10–17 who reside in the city of St. Louis, Missouri.

“My case manager helps me keep my behavior and anger under control.” – Client

Multi-Systemic Therapy

Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) is a program for juvenile offenders that intensively addresses the multidimensional nature of behavior problems in troubled youth. This evidence-based treatment focuses on those factors in each youth’s social network that are contributing to his or her antisocial behavior. The primary goals of MST are to decrease rates of antisocial behavior and other clinical problems, improve functioning (e.g., family relations, school performance), and achieve these outcomes at a cost savings by reducing the use of out-of-home placements such as incarceration, residential treatment, and hospitalization. The ultimate goal of MST is to empower families to build a healthy environment through the mobilization of existing child, family, and community resources. The program operates in Chicago, Effingham, Mt. Vernon, and St. Charles, Illinois.

“My case manager lets me know exactly what she has observed and what works well with my family. They complimented me on my use of skills learned.” – Client
Leta’s six-year-old twins have attended One Hope United’s Aurora Early Learning Center since they were less than one year old. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March of 2020, Leta’s family was one of over one thousand OHU families that abruptly transitioned to remote learning. While the sudden disruption created significant challenges for children, families and teachers, Leta found that the loving environment she’s seen and experienced at the Aurora Learning Center remained present.

From March to July of 2020, Leta helped guide her twins’ instruction with support from their teachers. Teachers stopped by their home once each week to drop off materials for activities, and always took the time to explain the lesson plan to Leta while checking in with her children and telling them how much they missed them. Teachers also sent video and text messages to kids and families throughout the week.

One Hope United’s teachers have also experienced dramatic changes to their day-to-day lives, and they’ve had to find creative ways to tailor their lesson plans to fit their students’ home environments. Angeles Gurrola, who works as an Assistant Teacher at the Aurora Early Learning Center, created new activities to keep her kids active and engaged. “Kids loved to do things like scavenger hunts through their homes,” she shared. “I would ask them to find something red, and bring it back to share it with the class. We also used a new topic for each day’s lesson; kids learned about firefighters, police officers, and memorizing their phone number in case of an emergency.”

Since transitioning back to in-person learning, Angeles has been glad to see that her students have retained lessons they learned in those early months. “Kids will say to me, ‘Miss Gurrola, do you remember when you were in the computer, and we talked about the letter G?’” Angeles shared.

“My kids keep me going. Life is hard right now, and I don’t know everything they’re going through. I want to provide a little light.”

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.*
EARLY LEARNING & CHILD DEVELOPMENT
SETTING CHILDREN UP FOR SUCCESS

The Bridgeport Child Development Center is acquired to provide child care services to families on Chicago’s South Side.

1979

EARLY LEARNING & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

EARLY LEARNING & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

CHILDREN & FAMILIES SERVED

2168

Early Learning and Child Development delivers quality childcare, early education, and school-age programs that prepare children for lifelong success and are accessible to all families.

(Pictured) Playtime at the Bridgeport Child Development Center, which opened in 1979.
EARLY LEARNING & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Child Development Centers

One Hope United Child Development Centers cater to the individual needs of each community, child and family in our care. We nurture children’s growth and partner with parents to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive learners. Our curriculum-based programs focus on preparing students to succeed when they enter kindergarten.

“The love, care and education my grandson receives, and the respect I receive, is just unbelievable. I am so thankful for OHU. I drive past a lot of centers just to come to OHU. We love them!” – Client

Home Visiting

Healthy Families Illinois (HFI) and the Doula program work with first-time parents to promote strength-based parenting skills and family bonds. Services begin during pregnancy or within two weeks after the birth of a child. The programs provide valuable information on parenting issues, educational opportunities, child development, parent-child bonding, teen parenting, family goals, and support plans.

Doulas work with pregnant teens. Doulas are trained and experienced childbirth coaches who provide physical, emotional, and research-based educational support throughout the last trimester of pregnancy, during labor/delivery, and for the first two months postpartum. HFI serves families in Lake County, Illinois.

Success by Six prepares children for bright futures through promoting good health, proper development and growth, and a sound education. The Success by Six program uses a unique learning-by-doing approach, allowing children to explore and build an understanding of the world while helping parents learn how to become their child’s first teacher. This program helps set children up for success in kindergarten and develop a love for reading. Home visitors teach new activities to parents that engage parents with children at each stage of their development and share information about accessing community resources. The program provides services in Lake County, Illinois.

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an evidence-based home visiting model that promotes the early development, learning and health of children by supporting and engaging their parents and caregivers. Home visits last for at least one hour in which time the home visitor will help to design services to meet the needs of the family. Topics covered include: how to soothe a crying baby, child development, medical and dental health, nutrition and feeding, age-appropriate discipline, setting and accomplishing goals, parent-child and family relationships, school readiness, and connections to community resources. Home visits begin during pregnancy or after the child is born and OHU staff visits families until the child is three years old. Families must live in North Chicago to participate in the PAT program.

“As a first-time mom, One Hope United has taught me a lot about being a mom. My doula was so helpful! They really helped me through the birth of my child.” – Client
Foster parents can be one of the most impactful resources in helping children reunify with a biological parent successfully. While a mother named Stacy* worked to be reunified with her three children, she built strong relationships with the foster parents caring for her youngest son and the paternal grandparents caring for her oldest son. This support system would end up being the difference in reunifying Stacey with her children.

Stacy struggled with undiagnosed mental health and substance abuse problems for many years. When OHU Case Manager Monaya Crossen began working with Stacy, she soon noticed that Stacy frequently rescheduled home visits, and seemed drowsy and disorganized at meetings. When Stacy’s mother passed away while incarcerated, she seemed to lose all hope.

A huge wakeup call came for Stacy at a court hearing a few months later. She had been working to obtain stable housing and employment, but hadn’t yet been reunified with her kids. When Stacy learned the judge had added a dual goal of adoption for her children, she became very emotional, and feared she was about to lose her children forever. This moment turned out to be a turning point in her life, and eventually led to a bright future for her and her family.

Though Stacy didn’t like asking for help, she eventually built a strong relationship with her Case Manager, Monaya, and still asks her advice when she faces tough situations. Stacy eventually conquered her addiction, got a new apartment, and built stronger relationships with her children. After three years apart, the family has been reunified, and are in a much better place as a family unit.

While they were living apart, Stacy was there for her children at school conferences, holidays and everything in-between. The foster parents and grandparents who cared for her kids were always in Stacy’s corner. “They played a major role in this reunification,” Monaya shared. “They didn’t put up any roadblocks. They drove Stacy to see apartments, brought the kids to her home for visits, and always included her in parent-teacher conferences.”

Stacy’s 5-year-old son has been diagnosed with autism, and has made significant progress since transferring to a special needs school, where he “soared.” They’re now working on transitioning him to his siblings’ school.

When Stacy saw signs of the same mental illness she struggles with in her daughter, she acted right away to get her help. All of Stacy’s kids are doing well in school, and they still see their foster parents regularly for haircuts and visits.

“This story shows that no one is perfect, and we all need to ask for help,” Monaya concluded. “I’m glad Stacy felt she could trust and lean on me.”

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.
Florida Case Management Services

One Hope United operations in Florida serve families who have been referred by the state’s child welfare system due to child neglect and/or abuse.

Child Welfare Case Management provides services for children and families. Some children remain home with their parents and services are provided to maintain and strengthen the family unit. Other children live with relatives or in licensed foster or group homes. When a child is placed outside of their home, reunification with their family is the desired outcome and effort focuses on returning the child home as soon as is safely possible. If a child cannot return to their family of origin, efforts turn to finding another legally permanent family for the child. Other permanent families may include relatives or other individuals who become legal guardians or adoptive parents. The program uses two models. First, the Family Team Conferencing Model is used to engage families. Second, the State of Florida has adopted a new practice model called Safety Decision Making Methodology.

In addition to case management services provided to the children and families referred to One Hope United, licensing and support services are also provided to the foster families and relatives caring for children while they are placed outside of their home.

“We have been through a few agencies and case managers, and I will say the One Hope United case manager has been the best person we have worked with thus far. She is compassionate and responsive in a way I have never seen before. She works very quickly on anything our family needs, and we never feel unheard or neglected.” – Client

Wendy’s Wonderful Kids

In 2011, One Hope United operations in Florida received the Wendy’s Wonderful Kids grant from the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption. This grant allowed Florida to hire two Adoption Recruiters who implement a proactive, child-focused recruitment program targeted at moving children from foster homes into adoptive families. Oftentimes, the children One Hope United serves are children with significant or complex medical needs, extremely challenging behaviors, sibling groups, and older youth. These children are typically the hardest children to move from foster care to adoption. The recruiters implement aggressive practices focused on finding the best home for a child through identifying and reaching out to family, friends, neighbors, and the communities in which they live. Additionally, the recruiters remain in consistent contact with the other agencies, Guardian ad Litems (GAL), and service providers who are also involved in the child’s case. The recruiters work with families by helping them prepare for adoption by hosting a monthly pre-adoptive preparation group, advocating on behalf of the child and adoptive family for the necessary services to ensure a successful adoption, and by remaining available to stabilize situations when an issue arises.
“You are the strongest person to ever sit in that chair,” Judge Ericka Sanders said to 16-year-old Bailey*. Bailey and her team of OHU counselors listened intently as Judge Sanders went on to praise Bailey for sharing her story of trauma and abuse, and bravely taking the next step in her healing process.

Bailey’s testimony comes three years after that of her twin sister, Bree*, who testified in court to the horrific abuse both girls endured at the hands of their adoptive father. This man is now in prison for the sexual assault of Bree that resulted in a pregnancy at the age of 13, and for the kidnapping of Bree and her son, Eli*. In the same year that Bree became pregnant, the girls also lost their mother to complications from rheumatoid arthritis, a disease that also inhabits Bailey’s body.

Because Bree was the only victim identified in the case, Bailey was denied the opportunity to testify at their adoptive father’s trial. For three years, Bailey has carried the weight of this forced silence with her. She has since been placed at One Hope United’s Centralia residential home for a second time after struggling with self-harm, suicidal ideations, and depression.

In February of 2020, Bailey’s counselors had an idea. The team wondered what would be different for Bailey if she could rewrite her narrative. What if she could tell her story to someone who could make real changes in the system? How would life be different for Bailey if she had her day in court? Judge Ericka Sanders, the Marion County Juvenile Judge, agreed that Bailey deserved this opportunity.

Judge Sanders has made great efforts to prioritize the mental health of any youth who comes into her courtroom. Knowing Judge Sanders’s propensity to be an agent of change, Bailey’s care team reached out to her with a novel idea. The team wanted to bring Bailey to the courthouse to testify in front of Judge Sanders and to share the story she had been robbed of telling three years prior. Within 15 minutes of the email being sent, Judge Sanders responded saying she would be honored to help.

Two weeks later, Judge Sanders met with Bailey’s care team at a local coffee house to iron out the details. OHU counselors Jayme Godoyo, Sarah Downen, Brandon Newcomer, and Jessica Perry shared more details of Bailey’s story with Judge Sanders. They agreed that Bailey’s court session should be treated as if it were a real court session, complete with Judge Sanders in her black robe and calling court into session for The People vs. Bailey’s abuser. Judge Sanders also shared with the team that the courthouse now has access to a therapy dog, and that it would be a good idea for Bailey to first practice being in the courtroom. The team agreed Bailey would love this idea, and it would be the perfect opportunity for the dog to use his skills.

On the day of Bailey’s court session, Judge Sanders offered her the choice to sit at a table or in the witness stand. Without hesitating, Bailey chose the witness stand.

When Bailey took her seat to the left side of the judge, she paused for a moment. Bailey was given the space and silence she needed to collect herself as her counselor, Jayme Godoyo, took a seat next to her. Quietly, Jayme provided Bailey the comfort she needed to regain her composure. Not sure where to begin, Jayme encouraged Bailey to start with her earliest memory.

The adults in the room sat silent and still, fighting back tears at times, as Bailey took the next thirty minutes to tell the story she had waited years to tell. With Jayme at her side, Bailey recounted the abuse she endured, the devastation she felt over her mom’s death, and the guilt she still carries with her today because she couldn’t stop her sister Bree’s sexual assault. “I’m protective of her,” Bailey said. “I’m happy we have Eli [Bree’s son], but I’m sad she got pregnant.”

When Bailey finished, she looked out onto the small crowd of people and said, “does anyone have any questions?” The conviction in her tone was that of a young woman in control of a room. When asked what advice she would give to other young girls who may have shared similar experiences, without hesitation Bailey softly but strongly stated, “Keep fighting...always keep fighting.”

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.
There are times when youth are unable to remain in a home setting. Adolescents who have experienced trauma often have trouble managing their emotions, which can sometimes lead to unsafe behavior. When these issues are present, youth are often referred to a residential program where they receive constant supervision and individualized treatment to address their symptoms, and build essential life skills. Treatment assists youth in transitioning into a lower level of care, such as returning to their biological home, a relative’s home, a foster home, group home, or a transitional living program.

The Delavan Lake summer camp property and Maywood Home are sold and an estate and mansion in Lake Villa, Illinois was purchased for $65,000.
The CARE Residential Program serves young men aged 8-18. The program uses a trauma-informed approach to help youth heal from past trauma, and learn strategies that help them make more positive decisions. Clients are provided with a safe, structured environment and individualized treatment to help them gain important life skills. The CARE Residential Program builds on young peoples’ strengths and provides opportunities to build a bright future. The program is located in Lake Villa, Illinois.

Rebound is a 24-hour, community-based transitional living facility serving males ages 17-20. Rebound works with the youth on employment skills, educational completion, money management, and other life skills needed to become successful adults in the community. Counselors and peers reinforce newly learned acceptable behaviors, while helping clients recognize and deal with unacceptable behaviors. Rebound participants develop their own individual transitional living plans with an ultimate goal of achieving independence by age 21. The program is in Waukegan, Illinois.

The treatment approach at One Hope United’s residential programs is youth-centered, family-focused, and the goal is to empower residents and families to solve their own problems whenever possible.
A 125-Year Legacy of Service...

It was 125 years ago that Ezra Scofield launched a charitable home to provide a safe and secure environment for the community’s most vulnerable children. That was the foundation of generosity and philanthropy upon which One Hope United has been built and remains the focus of our service today.

In RJ and Charles’ opening letter they said it well – this year was unprecedented for One Hope United. We faced many challenges this year and the philanthropic community rallied around us. Generous corporations and foundations provided COVID-relief funding to help address the unavoidable instability our families faced as a result of the pandemic.

We also grew concerned when the public health crisis caused us to cancel our in-person gala in the spring celebrating our 125th anniversary. Pivoting to a virtual event we hosted in October, the support we received was overwhelming and resulted in a record level of donors and contributions to support our mission.

Among our philanthropic accomplishments this year, it is important to note that our new strategic plan continues Ezra’s charitable legacy and emphasizes our commitment to broadening a culture of philanthropy throughout One Hope United.

As 2020 starts appearing in the rearview mirror, I am excited by the progress we made this year engaging new supporters who enabled us to serve new communities. While it may not have been the anniversary year we planned—most importantly—we celebrated through service!

Thank you for your support and contributing to our legacy –

Kate Shaffer
Chair, OHU Fund Development
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One Hope United is grateful for the generosity of our supporters.
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The Scofield Gibbs Society
One Hope United’s history is rooted in two acts of compassion toward children over 100 years ago. In 1895, assisted by his wife, retired Baptist missionary Rev. Ezra Scofield established a small shelter in Downers Grove, Illinois, after seeing five homeless children on their street. In 1903 in central Illinois, Alice Gibbs was determined to devote her time and means to caring for homeless children. Out of the original sites they founded evolved the OHU we know today, serving thousands of children and families across four states. Today we honor Rev. and Mrs. Ezra Scofield and Mrs. Alice Gibbs’ dedicated acts of kindness through the Scofield Gibbs Society. Members of this society have made a commitment to share a part of their trust or a bequest with One Hope United, providing a valuable legacy gift that will be invested in perpetuity to ensure every child and family we serve lives a life without limits.

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