



# CHILD FIND of AMERICA

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## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



## A message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends & Supporters,

When the coronavirus pandemic struck last spring I thought Child Find's case load would shrink, donations would shrivel, and staff would need to be cut.

*I was wrong!*

Parents have continued to call us for help... many of them asking for assistance in crafting safe child visitation schedules and options. Others are concerned that older children, frustrated by stay at home orders, would run away - risking infection.

Child Find's existing friends, as well as many new donors, have recognized the value of Child Find's telephone and computer-based service model. They continue to generously support our work to prevent and resolve the family conflicts that often lead to child abduction and abuse. Our long-time friends will remember that Child Find has served families well during past national crises. We helped reconnect families after the devastation of both Hurricane Katrina and 9/11.

Because of the generosity of our donors, we have been able to keep our exceptional case managers safe and on staff by together designing a virtual office, connecting those working from home to our call center and case management systems... and fostering teamwork via Zoom meetings!

Our past efforts to connect with and educate allied professionals about our important work primarily took place in-person, with staff traveling to conduct trainings and workshops at conferences nationwide. We're beginning to transpose those sessions to offer them on-line, both live and on demand... and we need to hire new staff to support this new approach to public and professional educational programming. Like you, we are all looking forward to returning to normal, or at least to creating a new normal in which families and children can be safe, and thrive.

All of us at Child Find, Board Members and Staff alike, thank you for your continuing support. It's caring people like you who have made it possible for Child Find to "bring kids home and keep them safe" these 40 years!

Thank you for your support and your interest,



Donna Linder  
Executive Director





Looking back . .

## THIS VICTIM BECAME AN ADVOCATE

*A letter from Cecilie, parentally abducted in 1974:*

I became acquainted with Child Find of America as a college student in 1997. I was taking a class in community organizing as part of my studies at Hunter College, and one of my assignments was to work as an intern at a non-profit organization of my choice for the semester. I chose to work at Child Find of America, and the experience changed my life. It turned me into an activist for missing children, and I am so grateful for all that I learned in my time there.

This wasn't my first encounter with Child Find of America. As a child who was internationally parentally abducted from Norway to the United States, Child Find had taken a strong interest in my mother's case and placed me on a milk carton in 1982. I was one of the first "Milk Carton Kids" ever, and of course this had a significant impact on me when I was a child. I am in the process of writing a memoir, *Soul Custody*, which will detail the story including the milk carton episode and how I saw one of the milk cartons with me on it one day while eating breakfast. The milk carton was central to my story, as was my time as an intern at Child Find.

I was never "found" in the typical sense. My father managed to hide me well enough that we stayed one step ahead of the authorities at all times. However seeing my picture on a milk carton during my time in hiding was the wake-up call I



*Cecilie near the time of her abduction*



*Cecilie's "Missing" press alert, and a copy of Issue #1 of The Link*

needed to question what my father was doing, and why we were living the strange life of hiding and running from place to place to hide from the mother I'd almost completely forgotten. Seeing my little face on that carton, and understanding that most of the world did not see things from my father's perspective, was the shock that I needed to rethink my entire life. I sought out my mother at 17 and ultimately reunited with her. The milk carton episode was pivotal in causing me to do so. As an aside, it was the first time I'd seen a picture of myself as a little child, and I was so happy to see it. Most of all, I am happy for the knowledge that people cared enough to take active and dramatic steps to help my mother.

During my time at Child Find in 1997, I wrote a newsletter that was sent to others who had experienced abduction, and in addition to hearing from other children and parents who'd also experienced abduction, a few journalists reached out. They wanted to hear my story and understand what parental child abduction was like from an adult child's perspective. I did not think I had anything of value to share with the world at the time, and did not see myself as able to express myself in the "right" way. However, Donna Linder and others at Child Find encouraged me to believe in myself and have the confidence to speak up. And so I did, though with great trepidation at first. It got

*continued on page 4*

# PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Fiscal Year June 1, 2019 - May 31, 2020

## 643 CASES

560 opened + 83 continued from previous years



### LOCATION SERVICES 1-800-I-AM-LOST

Callers connect to our location staff, who coordinate search efforts to find missing, kidnapped, runaway, and parentally/non-stranger abducted children.

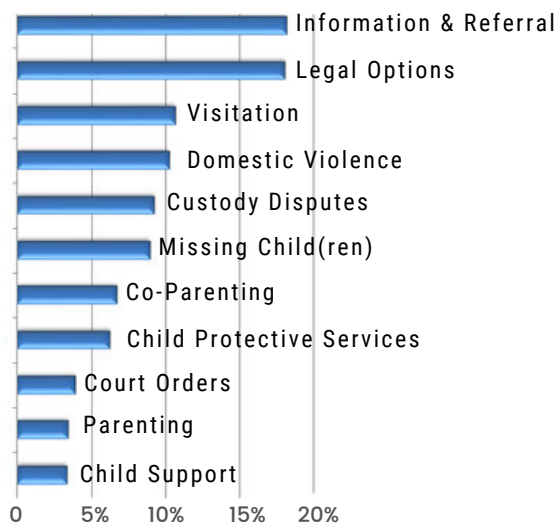
## 3080 CASEWORKER EFFORTS



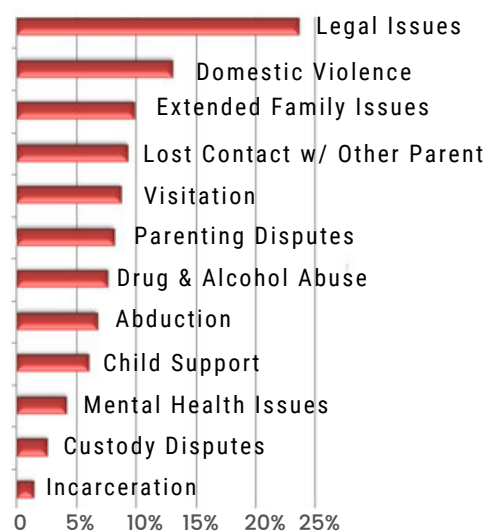
### PARENT HELP 1-800-716-4368

Callers connect to our caseworkers, who help defuse the family conflicts that can lead to child abduction and abuse.

#### Initial reasons callers made contact



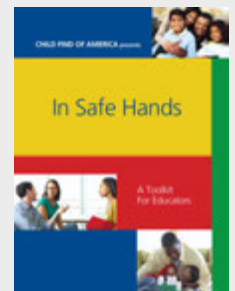
#### Additional issues we helped with



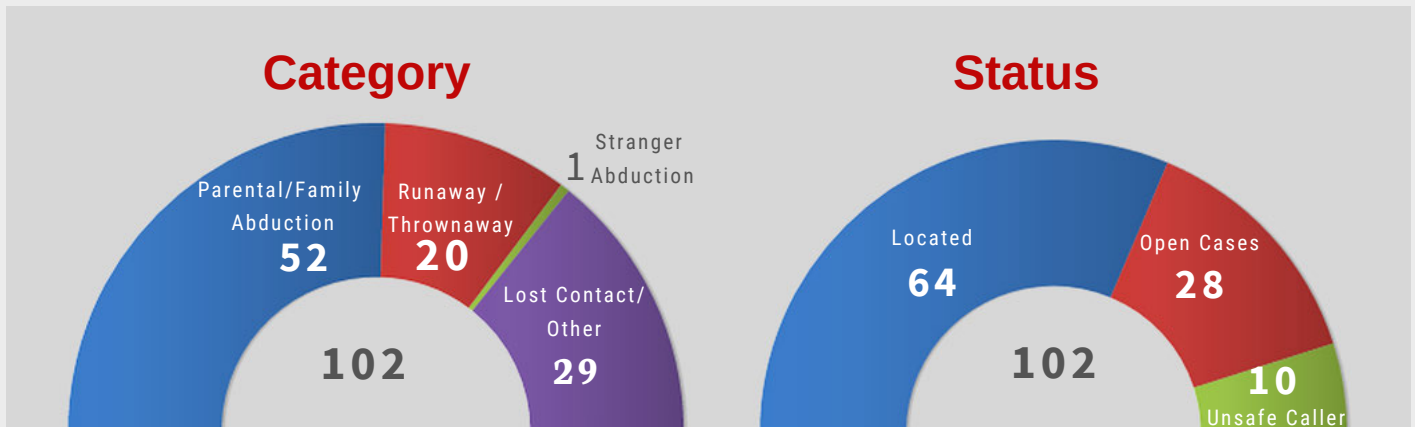
## EDUCATION & TRAINING

Child Find of America's Education & Training program delivers lectures and workshops to human service professionals and educators every year to further our mission of preventing and resolving the impact of parental conflict on children - which can lead to abduction, runaways, and child abuse. Our curriculum is informed by our casework as well as through the development of our own staff, who routinely attend trainings concerning the latest research on educational techniques and Child Find's program issues.

This year our in-person training sessions were cancelled from March 2020 on, due to COVID-19. Earlier in the fiscal year, we were able to deliver several workshops - including a full-day, on-site training to Hudson Valley early educators funded by designated donations raised through the 2019 Hudson Valley Gives online campaign. In all we delivered four in-person trainings and one webinar, reaching over 500 early educators, professionals and parenting groups regarding topics such as Co-Parenting, Relationship Skills, and Missing Children. Additionally, before our schedule was cut short, we distributed 1,575 In Safe Hands tool kits with the potential to positively impact 31,500 kids. We estimate that each tool kit used by 2 educators helps an average 10 families prevent and resolve household conflicts. In the spring we turned our attention to adapting our trainings to a webinar format for future delivery, and invested over 60 hours in the development of our case workers and professional trainers who attended many online professional sessions to hone their skills and keep abreast of best practices in child safety, resilience, and welfare.



# MISSING CHILDREN



The charts above represent the categories and status of the 102 location cases opened this year. 30 cases from previous years remain open - including 19 cold cases which we continue to publish while pursuing new leads, and coordinating with law enforcement.

It is also important to note that this year's 102 cases have adversely impacted 177 left-behind siblings who often must cope with a range of conflicting feelings like anger, guilt, fear and helplessness. To learn more, you can read: "What About Me? Coping with the Abduction of a Brother or Sister" at <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/217714.pdf>

## VICTIM/ADVOCATE continued from page 2

easier though, and I kept at it over the years. The whole experience was truly life-altering. It was wonderful to know that I had support, and heartwarming to know that others in similar situations had and still have such a special organization behind them.

The work that CFA does can mean the difference between hopelessness and hope, and that is priceless for parents and children going through the dangers and traumas of abduction, trafficking or runaways. I am in awe of the heroic work that the staff does, and grateful for the colossal efforts that lie behind the longevity of the organization. It is a testament to the people behind it, and it is crucial that it is kept up and running for many generations to come.

On behalf of my family and all future families who will benefit from your wonderful work: THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH!! Mere words can't express the gratefulness that I have for all you've done for me and my family, and for all the families that you have helped! You are a treasure to society!!

*Sarah C. Finkelstein Waters*



*Happy Family: Sarah Cecilie Finkelstein Waters with her husband and sons*

**"The work that CFA does can mean the difference between hopelessness and hope..."**



## BLINDSIDED: A DAD'S STORY

Randy and Katrina have shared custody of their 9 year-old son, Nathan, since birth. Katrina had primary residential custody but by agreement they had been sharing time in a close to even split. But shortly after Katrina broke up with her long-term boyfriend, she announced to Randy that she was moving from Vermont, where they lived near each other, to Georgia, saying she wanted to be closer to her family there.



Randy contacted Child Find's Parent Help distressed. Katrina and Nathan were going to be on a train the next morning. Randy had no idea what rights he had to keep contact with his son, but what he really wanted was for his son to stay with him in Vermont. As he explained, Nathan had lived in the area all his life and had no close connection to anywhere else.

Randy learned about his rights and options through this first contact with Parent Help. He learned that courts sometimes agree to grant emergency custody orders, even on a same day basis. He was able to discuss all of the pertinent details why he believed this to be in Nathan's best interests. Right away, he made plans to get the afternoon off from work, go down to the courthouse, and make his application. We told him to keep in touch.

The next day, Randy let us know his application had been successful. He had been granted emergency custody, and Nathan was now living with him. The judge had not been pleased that Katrina attempted to relocate out of state with their child without providing adequate notice. In the end, Katrina decided to make the move to Georgia on her own, giving Randy de facto primary custody of Nathan on an ongoing basis. Randy promised that he would get in touch should the need arise, thanking his case worker for explaining what he needed to know in a way that was easy to understand. He signed off saying: "Thank you for looking out for me and my son, Nathan. God Bless".

## THE HYBRID CASE

Most people are aware of the basic categories for missing children, and normally most cases will fit neatly into one of them: family abduction, runaway, or stranger abduction. However, Child Find often contends with cases we view as hybrid - situations that involve a runaway who has left home to move in with their parent who does not have court-ordered residential custody. We receive calls from both the parent reporting that the child has left the custodial home, and from the parent who suddenly is in the position of sheltering a child without the benefit of court-ordered legal rights.

Each case, like each family, is unique. It's not uncommon for a child to seek support from their non-residential parent, who may call Child Find with concerns that there will be criminal implications for taking the youth in. A further complication arises when the parent harboring the runaway has had parental rights terminated because of past abuse or neglect.

The following are two of Child Find's recent hybrid cases:

- *A Mom called to say she had secretly picked up her 16-year-old from her ex-husband's home at the child's request. Mom had no custodial rights to have her teen with her and feared that she would be in trouble for taking the child in violation of court orders.*
- *After having their parental rights terminated, a biological mom and dad had charges filed against them for hiding the children they had lost rights to. The kids were located and returned to their adoptive parents who called Child Find when the eldest went missing again. The teen is suspected to be on the run with the biological family.*

Child Find understands when situations require more than a discussion solely on the legal process, but one on family dynamics as well. Family history is vital to assessing how to pave the way for improvements in the relationships. We can discuss how to address common parent-teen conflicts, parenting style choices, and brainstorm creative ways to find resolution. When we are able to speak with both parents, we are able to engage them productively, knowing that this youth is loved and that collaboration may be better than forcing matters with punitive measures. If there are safety risks to a child being returned home, Child Find will make an assessment and address the situation accordingly.

Child Find welcomes every opportunity to enhance a child's well-being, and addresses the hybrid case with research, resources, and support for the best interests of children in all types of situations.



# FINANCIAL REPORT

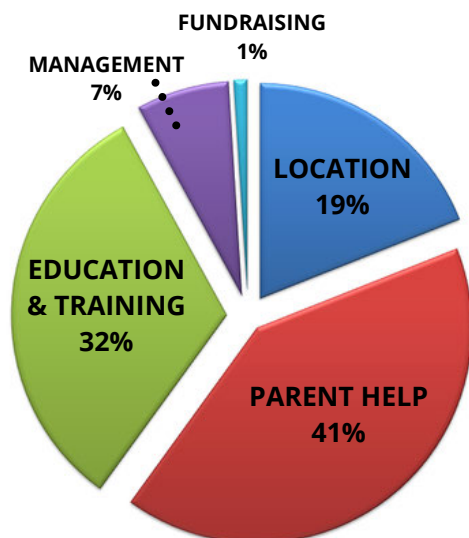
## AUDITED REVENUES & EXPENSES

FISCAL YEAR 06/01/2019 - 05/31/2020

FISCAL YEAR 06/01/2018 - 05/31/2019

| Revenue  | 2020             | 2019             |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Contributions - Cash                           | \$293,104        | \$295,294        |
| Contributions - Non-Cash                       | 50,239           | \$ 23,140        |
| Estate Bequest                                 | -                | \$279,742        |
| Grants/Contracts                               | \$188,242        | \$199,703        |
| Program Service Revenue                        | \$ 2,575         | \$ 1,071         |
| Interest & Dividends                           | \$ 8,663         | \$ 4,956         |
| Unrealized Gain on Securities                  | \$ 8,797         | \$ 975           |
| <b>Total Revenue Gains &amp; Other Support</b> | <b>\$551,620</b> | <b>\$804,881</b> |
| <b>Expenses</b>                                |                  |                  |
| Program Services                               | \$454,223        | \$429,434        |
| Supporting Services                            | \$ 35,241        | \$ 35,076        |
| Fundraising                                    | \$ 7,078         | \$ 11,794        |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>                          | <b>\$496,542</b> | <b>\$476,304</b> |
| <b>Net Assets</b>                              |                  |                  |
| Change in Net Assets                           | \$ 55,078        | \$328,577        |
| Net Assets Beginning of Year                   | \$630,606        | \$302,029        |
| <b>Net Assets End of Year</b>                  | <b>\$685,684</b> | <b>\$630,606</b> |

91% OF EXPENSES WERE ALLOCATED  
TO PROGRAMMING IN FISCAL YEAR 2020



Child Find has received an A+ rating  
from Charity Watch since 1997  
EIN 22-2323336



Child Find's IRS-990 and audited Financial Statements  
are posted on our website: [www.childfindofamerica.org](http://www.childfindofamerica.org)

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Aaron I.

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**Spanish Intake**

Graciela T.

Javier C.

# HAVE YOU SEEN THESE CHILDREN?



Call 1-800-I-AM-LOST



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King Walker  
Gary, IN



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**CHILD FIND of AMERICA**

BRINGING KIDS HOME • KEEPING THEM SAFE



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