

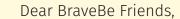
BRAVERY (noun)

brav•ery | 'brāv-rē

1 : the quality or state of having or showing mental or moral strength to face danger, fear, or difficulty

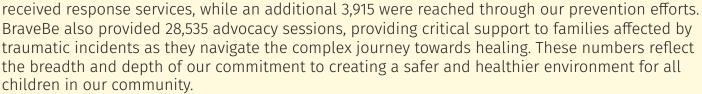
2 : the quality or state of being brove





As we reflect on the past year, we are overwhelmed with gratitude for the support of our donors, partner agencies, and the entire BraveBe community. Your commitment to our mission has empowered us to make an impact on the lives of children and families, and we are excited to share highlights of the year in our Impact Report.

In 2023, BraveBe served a total of 8,404 children, marking a significant milestone in our efforts to provide holistic support to those affected by child abuse. Among them, 4,489 children



Another major milestone for the year was the completion of the Room to Heal expansion project. We are thrilled to announce that BraveBe is now co-located with the Lincoln Police Department Special Victims Unit, Foster Care Closet, and private therapists. Thanks to your generous contributions, we were able to create a space that fosters healing and provides comfort for children and families navigating the challenging aftermath of trauma.

As we look to the future, we remain committed to our mission of protecting and advocating for the well-being of children. Thank you for embracing bravery with us as we strive to create a safer and brighter future for all children.

All the best,



Paige Piper, MA Executive Director





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You Matter

Community Support Financial Health

Board of Directors

Children served through response & prevention services 4489 children served through response services

3915 children served through prevention services

Reason for Referral

(Response Services)

33% Sexual Assault

26% Neglect

15% Physical Abuse

12% Domestic or Family Violence

10% Drug Endangered

2% Commercial Sexual Exploitation

1% Child Pornography

1% Other Victimization

Ethnicity of Child Served

(Response Services)

67% White/Non-Latino

15% Hispanic

10% African American

3% Native American

1% Asian

1% Multi-Racial

3% Not Reported

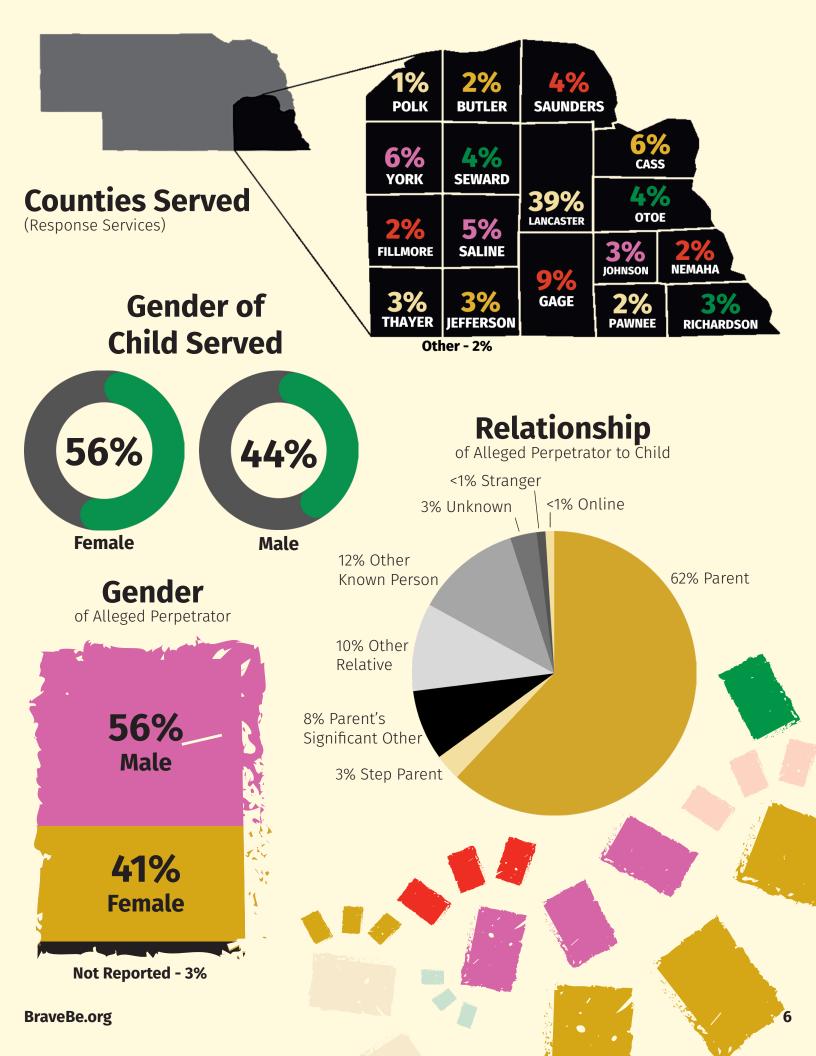
Age of Child Served

33% 0-6 Years

34% 7-12 Years

Not Reported - 1%

29% 13-17 **Years**





"Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today."

-Thich Nhat Hanh

FAMILY ADVOCACY 28,535 Advocacy sessions completed in 2023.

Family Advocates offer vital support and guidance to children and families impacted by abuse. As compassionate allies, they amplify the voices of children and prioritize their needs, providing emotional support, resources, and empowerment through the legal process. This approach aids in immediate recovery, contributes to breaking the cycle of abuse, and fosters resilience, laying the groundwork for a brighter future for every child.

41% of cases were court involved.

Court School is a specifically designed curriculum used to make the court process less intimidating for children. Court School helps children understand the importance of their testimony, and allows them the opportunity to practice being a witness and answering questions. The practice questions are not related to their actual case. Court School helps children become familiar with the courtroom process and the people they will meet there.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Brittany is available each day to assist caregivers, therapists, school personnel, and other community members with concerns for their children or children they know. She connects caregivers and other supportive adults to resources including therapy, housing, basic needs, and legal services. Brittany is an incredible advocate for concerned individuals who are unfamiliar with the reporting and investigative processes.

Brittany works closely with investigative partners to coordinate a response once a report of child abuse or neglect has been made. In situations where investigative agencies are not involved, Brittany provides individualized education to callers and offers alternative interventions and referrals.

Families often feel isolated due to the nature of their concerns. Brittany is able to provide the guidance and support families need when they're at their most vulnerable.



391
Community
Response Calls
in 2023

THE IMPACT

At BraveBe Child Advocacy Center, we recently received a call from a family seeking support in addressing sexualized behavior in one of their children. Our primary aim is to ensure that these families are connected with the necessary services and resources.

We diligently assessed the situation and provided referrals tailored to the specific needs of the family. Following up with this family was integral to our approach; we regularly checked in to see whether they had successfully accessed the services we reccommended.

It is heartening to hear from families who have been able to utilize the resources we suggested to them. We often receive updates from families, sometimes months later, sharing progress or simply expressing gratitude for our help during a challenging time. These interactions reaffirm the importance of our work in supporting families and children in need.

-Brittany Mandery Community Response Family Advocate



MEDICAL SERVICES

Medical examinations at BraveBe are conducted with sensitivity and compassion and are essential for ensuring the safety and well-being of children. All children with concerns of abuse or neglect are offered medical care to detect and address any health concerns, collect forensic evidence, and to provide education, reassurance, and support. BraveBe medical providers create a safe space for children to ask questions about their bodies. By emphasizing the importance of their health and well-being, our providers strive to empower children, instilling in them a sense of control over their bodies.



medical examinations completed.



80%

of medical examinations completed in 2023 related to sexual abuse.



55

foster care examinations in 2023, a 400% increase since 2021.

MORE HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023, BraveBe began offering on-site acute sexual assault exams, enabling the collection of evidence kits within critical timeframes—72 hours for prepubescent children and 120 hours for adolescents following instances of sexual abuse.

BraveBe strengthened partnerships with Bryan Health, CHI Health, Lincoln Police Department, and the Attorney General's Office through a protocol that enhances collaboration between hospital nurses, family advocates, and medical providers. This includes 24/7 consultation with BraveBe nurses to determine if examinations can be deferred to BraveBe for specialized care in lieu of the traditional hospital response.

In collaboration with Foster Care Closet and the Department of Health and Human Services, BraveBe's medical team now conducts entry exams for children entering the foster care system. This allows for prompt identification of urgent medical needs and connects children with community resources for ongoing care; ensuring children enter foster care in good health.



Thanks to the generous support of Women Investing in Nebraska, BraveBe's York office has pioneered Nebraska's first satellite medical clinic. Previously limited to forensic interviews and advocacy, the addition of medical exams in August 2023 has elevated the impact of this location as a vital resource for children experiencing trauma in York and the surrounding areas.

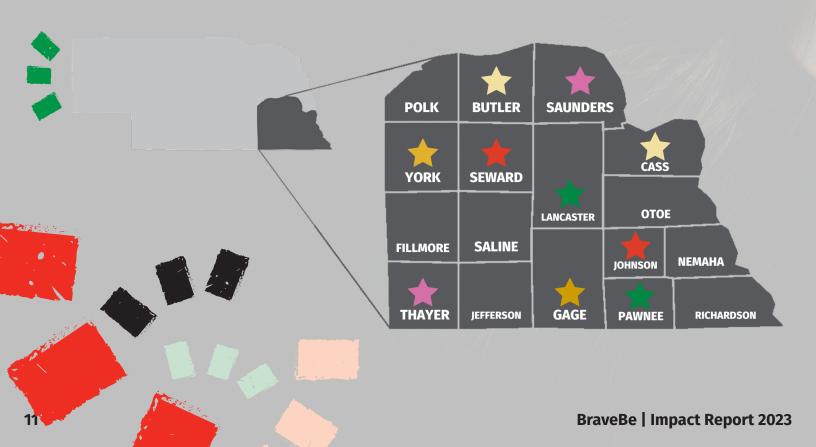




Team Response to Anti-Trafficking & Child Exploitation

Lancaster County's T.R.A.C.E. team is a coalition of law enforcement and child welfare experts who provide a coordinated response to child victims of sex and/or labor trafficking, and children who are at high-risk of exploitation. The T.R.A.C.E. team provides direct intervention through case coordination and advocacy, as well as extensive community outreach and education. This team provides training for investigative personnel and civilians alike at local, state, and national levels. This commitment to education has expanded BraveBe's anti-trafficking efforts to 11 counties in Nebraska. In 2023, BraveBe T.R.A.C.E. staff evaluated 273 cases, emphasizing both individual intervention and systemic reform to prevent child trafficking.

374 youth were identified as survivors of human trafficking.





At sentencing, the perpetrator received a lengthy sentence that provided relief for the survivors and our team. With their consent, Andrea's advocate facilitated a meeting between the survivors where they shared experiences, exchanged contact details, and established a support network with each other. BraveBe helped to foster a sense of community and shared strength among the survivors. They found solace in each other, realizing they were not alone in their struggles; and for the first time in a long time,

they felt safe.

Andrea's journey is a testament to her resilience, the commitment of her advocate, and the importance of long-term support in the aftermath of trauma.

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THE IMPACT: Outcome Measurement Surveys



BraveBe collects feedback from children and their caregivers through Outcome Measurement Surveys, leading the national standard with about 85% of families participating. These surveys help us understand the family's experience and are used in strategic planning. In response to the 2022 survey results identifying mental health services as a crucial need for families, BraveBe expanded its mental health facilities and providers.

99%

of surveyed caregivers said they believe their child felt safe at BraveBe. 98%

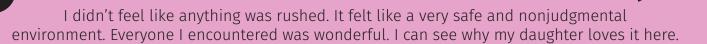
of surveyed caregivers said after meeting with the BraveBe team, they knew what to expect with the situation facing them and their child. 100%

of surveyed caregivers said BraveBe staff provided them with resources to support their child.

CAREGIVERS TELL US...

Everyone was very friendly and answered all questions we had. I am thankful for the calm manner which Advocates spoke to us and assured me I was doing everything right.

This is the first place that I have actually felt like everyone really cares about my children and their safety. Thank you.



98%

of surveyed youth stated BraveBe staff made them feel safe 98%

of surveyed youth stated BraveBe staff were either good or very good at listening to them. 95%

of surveyed youth felt that BraveBe staff cared about them.

YOUTH TELL US...



Everyone was very nice and super welcoming. I felt like I could really talk about everything.

The decor is cute and the people are understanding and kind. Feels like a house and not a facility.



It felt comfortable. It felt like I could tell them everything. It seemed like they cared. It makes you feel at home and safe.



"Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today."

-Thich Nhat Hanh

ROOM TO HEAL

The completion of the Room to Heal Capital Campaign marks a significant milestone in the organization's mission to combat child abuse and provide comprehensive support to young survivors. In 2023, we watched as the "barn" building came to life, allowing us to co-locate with the Lincoln Police Department Special Victims Unit.

In this same vein, the expansion has allowed us to strengthen our partnerships with several agencies, including Bryan Health and St. Elizabeth; Foster Care Closet, private mental health providers, and the University of Nebraska's Project SAFE, a long-standing partner of BraveBe. Additionally, we have been able to increase our capacity for training and prevention through this expansion, allowing us to pour more energy into the proactive measures of preventing abuse before it occurs. Our expansion allows us to provide holistic care, while improving our efforts to address the physical, mental, and emotional aspects of abuse.

"The last year has allowed for example after example of better staffing of cases and team collaboration, which ultimately leads to a better overall experience and outcome for victims and families. From being in the same building to brain storm as a team, to the ease of running next door for an unexpected shift in a case that requires the law enforcement lens, this co-location has proven to benefit the families we serve in a variety of ways."

-Lincoln Police Department Captain Jake Dilsaver



The Haven, managed by Foster Care Closet, provides a comforting space for children awaiting placement into foster care. Haven staff offer children a warm meal, basic resources, and clothing to ensure their needs are met.

THE IMPACT: Six-year-old Tommy, a recent recipient of BraveBe's care, found himself navigating the transition into foster care. Upon stepping into the Haven/Foster Care Closet, his eyes took in the neatly arranged racks of brand new clothes, each with unfamiliar price tags—a sight that stirred both confusion and excitement for him. Accustomed to hand-me-downs and thrifted garments, the concept of owning brand new clothes was new to Tommy.

As he eagerly chose items, the weight of his impending journey lifted for just a moment, replaced by a newfound sense of dignity and belonging. In that moment, amidst the aisles of new clothes, Tommy's perception of foster care shifted—from the unknown to a realm of promise, where even the simplest joys, like owning a new shirt, carried the power to add some positivity his outlook on the road ahead.



PATHWAYS

- Mental health plays a vital role in healing for children who have experienced abuse. BraveBe Family Advocates made 1,379 referrals for mental health services through the Pathways program which connects families with:
- Emotional Support
- Trauma Recovery
- · Improved Mental Health
- Enhanced Coping Skills
- · Prevention of Long-Term Effects
- · Empowerment and Self-Esteem

Many families have found BraveBe to be a nurturing environment for their healing journey. To further accommodate the demand, BraveBe has collaborated with private therapists and Project SAFE from the University of Nebraska to bolster our on-site mental health services. In 2023, Family Advocates made 508 referrals to our on-site providers. These providers offer trauma-informed, evidence-based treatment methods tailored to the specific needs of children and families.

508

Mental health referrals to onsite providers though Pathways

907

Team meetings facilitated with partner agencies

TEAM FACILITATION

BraveBe's MDT Coordinators work closely with partner agencies to coordinate a collaborative response to the investigation and treatment of child abuse. They facilitate investigation and treatment team meetings in 17 counties. In 2023, the various multidisciplinary teams reviewed 3816 cases of alleged child maltreatment involving 8017 children. Our partner agencies include local, state, and federal law enforcement, Department of Health and Human Services, prosecuting attorneys, Juvenile Probation, schools, medical and mental health professionals, and other victim and child serving organizations.

PEER REVIEW FACILITATOR FOR FORENSIC INTERVIEWS

Accreditation through the National Children's Alliance requires all forensic interviewers to participate in a structured forensic interview peer review process at least two times per year. Peer review serves as a quality assurance mechanism that reinforces the methodologies utilized and provides support and problem-solving for participants. Structured peer review encompasses opportunities for review and performance feedback in a professional and confidential setting, as well as opportunities for networking, relevant research and training in the field.

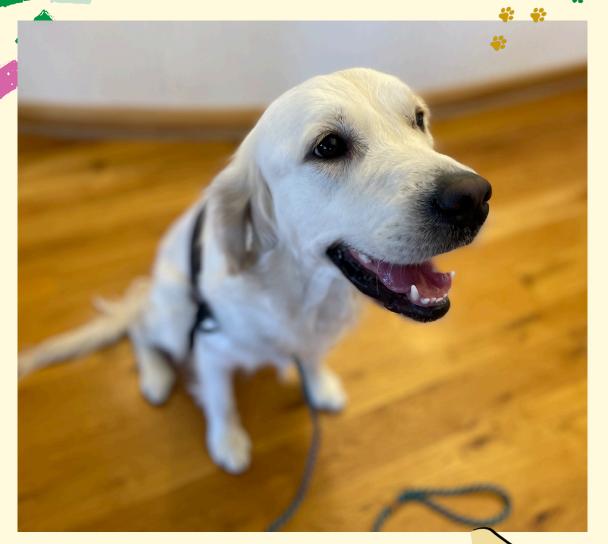
In 2023,BraveBe staff member, Jake Hedden facilitated 19 peer review sessions for the Midwest Regional Child Advocacy Center (MRCAC). There was an average of 9 forensic interviewers per session, representing at least 8 different states.



BraveBe.org

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Brayese WELCOMES FACILITY DOG Edvecienter Eevee! ** **



Eevee, our newest addition to the BraveBe staff, has quickly become an invaluable member of our team. As a trained comfort dog Eevee provides support to children who visit BraveBe, sitting with them during forensic interviews, advocate conversations, or while simply waiting in the lobby. Eevee's friendly demeanor and ability to connect with people of all ages helps foster an environment of trust and safety at BraveBe, often providing moments of joy and distraction during what can be a difficult time. Eevee's influence extends beyond the children we serve; she also comforts our staff and partners.















TRAINING FOR PARTNERS & PROVIDERS: Child Abuse & Neglect 101

This course trains mandatory reporters to effectively identify and report child abuse and neglect. Participants learn through discussions on reporting challenges, practicing minimal facts interviewing, accessing resources, and gaining confidence in recognizing and reporting abuse promptly. Activities cover defining abuse, understanding reporting obligations, questioning techniques, and the roles of child protective services, law enforcement, and child advocacy centers. The course targets school personnel, healthcare professionals, youth organizations, and the public, empowering a wide range of individuals to protect children in our community.

Brayebe on the move

BraveBe's team traveled across the country in 2023, presenting at four international conferences, during which they shared pioneering insights and strategies to protect children and advocate for justice reform. Their impactful presentations illuminated critical issues at the forefront of child welfare and inspired audiences nationwide.

2023 National Conferences:

- International Conference on Child & Family Maltreatment -San Diego, CA
- · National Justice Conference Tacoma, WA
- · International Symposium on Child Abuse Huntsville, AL
- · Crimes Against Children Conference Dallas, TX



5269Adults Trained

3915 Youth Trained

TRAINING FOR YOUTH:

BraveBe now offers Digital Citizenship as a school-based prevention program for youth. The goal of this training is to help keep youth safe while they are exploring online platforms. The program empowers youth to understand the impact of their digital footprint and how to spot and respond to cyberbullying and digital dangers.

These dangers are explored through the following content:

- · Digital Awareness & Self-Management
- · Concept of the Invisible Audiences
- · Oversharing & Your Digital Footprint
- · Presenting Yourself Online | Fake Profiles
- Cyberbullying
- Sexting & Sextortion
- · Online Chatting & Red Flags & How to Protect Yourself
- Risky Platforms: Games, Apps & Meeting Off-line



NOT A WHOUMBER LOVE 146

BraveBe offers an empowering training opportunity for youth, ages 12-18, focused on preventing trafficking and exploitation through an engaging five-module curriculum. Led by three certified facilitators, Not a Number curriculum goes beyond the facts and inspires youth to make safe decisions by addressing vulnerabilities, challenging stereotypes, equipping them with essential skills, and building healthy support

systems to navigate potential risks safely. By fostering open conversations and providing opportunities for self-expression, the program empowers youth to raise awareness, access community resources to ultimately enhance resilience, knowledge, and self-confidence amidst the dangers of trafficking and exploitation.

For more information about BraveBe Child Advocacy Center's training opportunities or to request a training, please visit our website:

Bravebe.org/Training

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Introducing:

brave faces

In 2023, BraveBe Child Advocacy Center established an Adverse Childhood Experience program called Brave fACEs. Brave fACEs focuses on preventing, recognizing, and responding to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), informed by the landmark study by Kaiser Permanente and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). ACEs encompass abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction, with high ACE scores correlating with severe health risks such as ischemic heart disease, strokes, and mental health challenges.

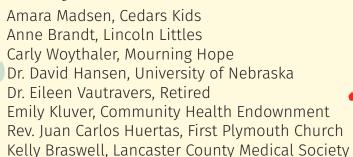
BraveBe's Brave fACEs crafted a strategic plan with five primary goals for ACE **prevention** and **intervention**:

- 1. Community
- 2. Data Collection
- 3. Partnership Building
- 4. Community Response Planning
- 5. Training Initiatives

These priority areas will employ the CDC's six strategies to enhance economic supports, promote social norms, ensure childhood well-being, educate families, provide mentorship for youth, and integrate trauma-informed care across sectors. By emphasizing prevention, resilience, and trauma-informed approaches, the Institute aims to address health disparities at their root, focusing on holistic well-being and positive childhood experiences.

In September, BraveBe and First Plymouth Church co-hosted an event featuring author Casey Gwinn, known for his work on the Family Justice Center model, as well as his book: Hope Rising: How the Science of Hope Can Change Your Life. Gwinn spoke to over 200 community members about overcoming trauma and adversity through the science of hope. In November, BraveBe and the Lancaster County Medical Society hosted Dr. Amy Shriver, general pediatrician at Blank Children's Pediatric Clinic and Assistant Professor of Specialty Medicine at Des Moines University. Dr. Shriver presented about how early childhood experiences shape brain architecture, as well as strategies and opportunities for intervention in pediatric medicine.

Advisory Board Members:



- Lisa Vail, Bryan Health
 Dr. Marilyn Moore, Retired
- Dr. Michelle Walsh, Pediatrics PC Remonte Green, NE DHHS
- Russ Uhing, Retired
 Kerry Kernen, Lancaster Health Department
 Lori Siebel, Community Health Endowment

A sincere thank you to the Community Health Endowment for their generous support of Brave fACEs of Hope. Their commitment to prevention efforts in our community is both innovative and vital.















BraveBe Child Advocacy Center's 2023 Harvest of Hope event marked its 6th year with an unforgettable evening at Junto Wine. Harvest of Hope serves as an inspirational platform to raise awareness nd funds for BraveBe's mission. Through the generosity of attendees and supporters,

over \$110,000 was raised

in support for child victims of abuse in Southeast Nebraska.

The highlight of the evening was hearing from a caregiver who shared her journey and experiences with BraveBe. Her strength and resilience underscored the importance of BraveBe's services and the impact it has on individuals and families in our community.

Attendees also enjoyed live and silent auctions that offered an array of

exclusive items and experiences while enjoying the beautiful scenery and celebrating the harvest.

The success of Harvest of Hope is not possible without the generosity of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. The overwhelming support and solidarity demonstrated at Harvest of Hope, inspires the BraveBe team as we continue providing vital services to child victims of abuse and neglect in our community.

HOLIDAY GIFT GIVING

BraveBe is honored each year to connect our community's spirit of generosity with local families in need during the holiday season through our annual Holiday Gift Giving program. 2023 gift donations brightened the lives of 420 individuals across 107 families, spreading joy far and wide.

To the 85 donor groups who generously contributed, we express our deepest gratitude. Your kindness has created lasting memories and moments of joy for hundreds of people in our community, embodying the true spirit of the holiday season.

A special acknowledgment goes out to the 160 volunteers who gave their time and energy to wrap thousands of gifts. Volunteer groups from United way, Farmers Mutual of Nebraska, Nelnet, Union Bank & Trust, and others transformed our holiday gift area into a full-scale Santa's workshop. Your passion and hands-on involvement help make this program a success, bringing smiles (and happy tears!) to the faces of children and families in need.

The Holiday Gift Giving program will start accepting donor applications in November. For more information or to be added to our donor or volunteer list got this program, please email Abby Worster at: Abby@BraveBe.org.



107

Families



420

People



85

Donors



160

Volunteers









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FINANCIAL HEALTH Funding 35% GRANTS & GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS PUBLIC SUPPORT PROGRAM SERVICES

Expenses







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Christina Oldfather - Rabble Mill

Scott Robbins - Lincoln SCHEELS

Terry Wagner - Lancaster County Sheriff

Marty Walter - Soarin Group

Rita Walz - Sutton Dermatology & Aesthetics





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