



2020

# ANNUAL REPORT

CAMPING, CONNECTIONS  
AND CONFIDENCE FOR  
CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

## Message from the Executive Director

Happy Trails for Kids has always been more than a camp, and nothing has made this clearer than navigating through the pandemic. This past year, we worked tirelessly to bring the spirit of camp, and all that Happy Trails stands for, into the hearts and homes of the children we serve. Virtual camps, tutoring, essential services, weekly virtual extracurricular activities, online workshops for older campers, Happy Camper Kit packages, personal outreach and so much more carried our campers through some of the darkest days. Through Happy Trails for Kids, hundreds of children foster care have sought comfort, found support, and been reminded that happiness and hope are theirs for the taking.

As we forge new trails, it has become increasingly clear that through these different channels and delivery of services, we have had the ability to deepen our connections with campers – and as a result, are better able to offer meaningful support during the times when it matters most. And what we have always known, and what was reinforced during this past year, is that camp matters, and so do these incredible kids! As the days become brighter, we look forward to resuming in-person programming and celebrating the many aspects of our camping community that we have all missed so much. At the same time, while we celebrate the steps forward, we know that the trauma and pain felt this year still rests deeply within many of our boys and girls. We will continue to invest in the lives of children, recognizing the power and impact our community can have on transforming the lives of children growing up in foster care.

Through it all, your generosity and commitment to the children of Happy Trails has prevailed. You have changed lives, brought happiness and hope, and reminded our special campers that they are important. By pulling together, we not only pulled through, but we pulled ahead.



**Lindsay Elliott, JD, MSW**  
Executive Director Happy Trails for Kids





# We're Here For You



## OUR MISSION

...  
**HAPPY TRAILS FOR KIDS** is dedicated to bringing camping, connections and confidence into the lives of children impacted by the foster care system. Through the great outdoors, year-round extracurricular engagements, overnight camp and mentors, children in foster care are transformed by the power of positivity and possibility and are equipped with the skills and support to live happy and healthy lives.



“Happy Trails is not just a camp. It's a family who cares about you. Because of Happy Trails, I feel like I am not alone in this world and that I have people who support me. In this painting, I wanted to show that even though I am having a hard time because of all that is happening in the world and at home, Happy Trails has been here for me. Without Happy Trails, I would not be doing my art again. It has provided me with so many opportunities to meet new people. I've had so much fun with the zoom sessions and there is always something new to learn. Happy Trails gives me hope and make me feel happy and loved.”



# OUR PROGRAMMING



## “IMAGINE... YOU CAN” - Virtual Summer Camp

What does a virtual camp really mean? We asked ourselves this question early on in the planning process. It turns out, it means creating a space where campers can be together, where laughter and fun reigns and where children feel safe, valued and connected. Talent shows, dance, arts and crafts, crazy hair day, cabin time and our amazing team of camp counselors brought so much joy. Thus, while our camp wasn't in person, it was, without a doubt, still camp. By distributing tablets and computers, along with mailing “Happy Camper Kits” with camp materials and supplies, we were able to remove barriers and ensure meaningful participation. We brought all of our camp traditions and so much more into the homes of children in foster care, and they loved it – and so did we.

## VIRTUAL CAMP... BY THE NUMBERS

50 “Guest Facilitators”  
20 Activities, Crafts and Workshops  
32 Camp Counselors  
60 Sessions of Cabin Time  
300 Camper Kits mailed

Countless Smiles  
and Laughs...



## “EMBRACE YOUR DREAM” - Virtual Winter Camp

Three days of virtual fun, combined with the delivery of hundreds of toys, brought holiday cheer for over 200 children and families impacted by the foster care system. Thank you to our camp counselors, facilitators and amazing partners, including the Felix Organization for bringing the spirit of camp to boys and girls growing up in foster care.





# OUR PROGRAMMING

## Happy Trails at Home

Prior to the pandemic, children in foster care often reported feeling a sense of isolation, and the impact of COVID-19 has significantly exacerbated the source of these feelings. In order to meet the urgent needs of our campers, Happy Trails, launched a robust online programming initiative called, Happy Trails at Home. Our online engagements allow campers to access experiences they might not otherwise have, and most importantly serve as a source of stability.

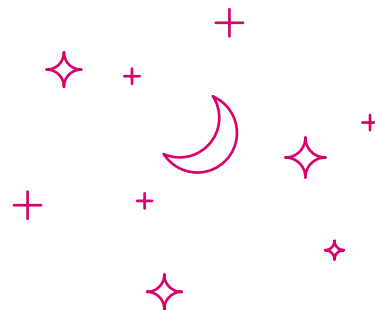
As a result, **we doubled our reunion events** for campers of all ages. Whether it was ocean therapy, music theater, Halloween festivities or simply “cabin-time” where campers engaged in honest discussions reflective of the times and challenges facing our society, maintaining a consistent presence in the lives of campers is critical to our model.

Under the **Trails to Success Initiative**, we continued to bring specialized workshops, and individualized outreach to older campers, including college readiness, health and wellness, citizenship, as well as leadership development through our Junior Counselor Program.

## NEW INITIATIVES

**Tutoring:** In collaboration with the Junior League of Los Angeles, youth are matched with tutoring for ongoing and consistent academic support. The initiative directly benefits students, and also provides support to caregivers struggling with the challenges presented by distance learning.

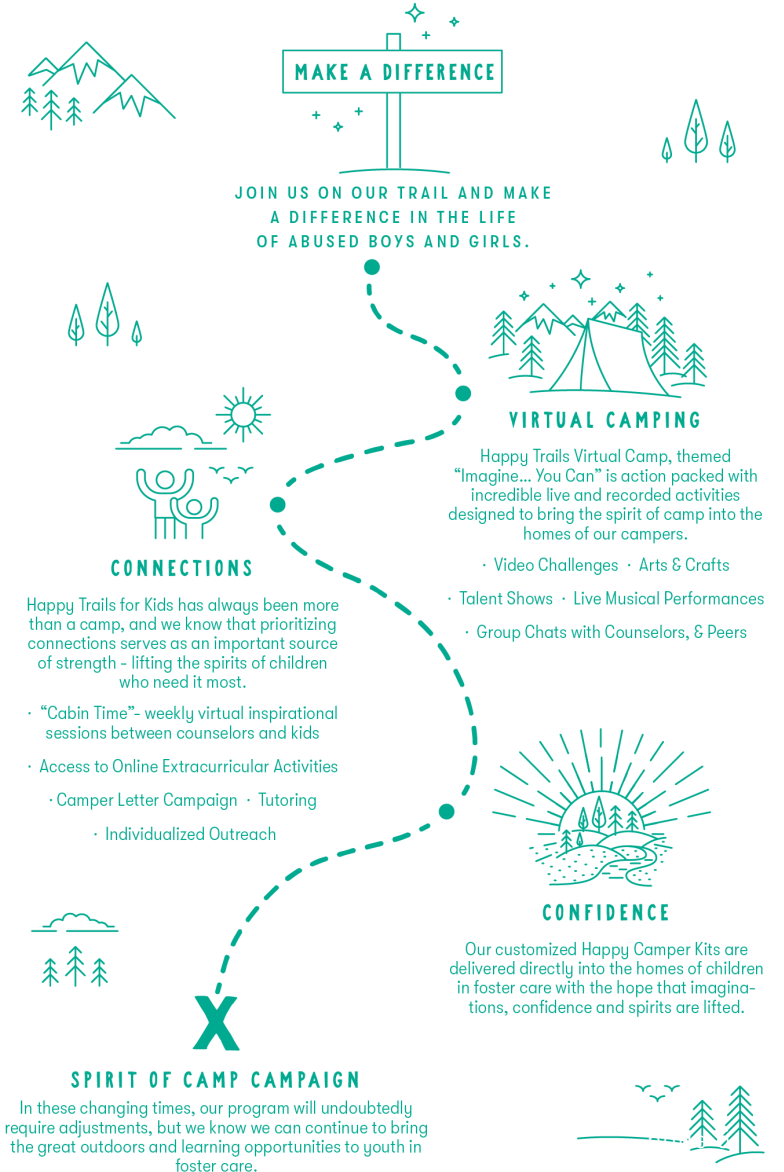
**Happy Camper Hangout:** The inequities of play and limited access to extracurricular activities is a growing concern for children in foster care. In collaboration with Happy Camper Live, children impacted by the foster care system look forward to participating in weekly fun, safe and accessible extracurricular activities.



## HAPPY TRAILS AT HOME

### We've Got Spirit Campaign

Each year, Happy Trails for Kids brings camping, connections and confidence into the lives of hundreds of children in foster care. With the changing times and the current pandemic our programming make look different, but the spirit of Happy Trails remains unchanged.



# OUR EVENTS



From  
Happy Trails,

Happy  
Holidays



## Cantor Fitzgerald Charity Day Sept 11, 2020

Happy Trails for Kids was proud to be featured in the 2020 Cantor Fitzgerald Virtual Charity Day held in honor of those who their lives on 9/11. The Cantor Relief Fund supports charities around the world and we are so grateful to have their support. Actress Virginia Williams served as the Happy Trails Ambassador. We appreciated her efforts to help raise awareness for the meaningful work Happy Trails for Kids does for children foster care.



## #WhyIHike Virtual Hike-a-Thon December 4-6, 2020

For the past nine years, Happy Trails for Kids and our wonderful community have gathered at Temescal Gateway Park to hike and celebrate in support of children in foster care. This year, we hosted a #WhyIHike Virtual Hike-a-Thon. With over 300 participants, Happy Trails for Kids raised nearly \$100,000. Thank you for walking this trail with us in support of children in foster care!

## Holiday Drive-Thru December 6, 2020

The Happy Trails Holiday Drive-Thru brought holiday cheer and happiness into the lives of our campers. Through the support of Vittorio's Restaurant, partners and volunteers, we delivered hundreds of toys, winter virtual camp kits, food and so much more to 200 children and families impacted by the foster care system.

VIRGINIA WILLIAMS



CANTOR  
CHARITY DAY







## The Max and Janet Salter Scholarship Fund



In 2020, at the age of 97, we said goodbye to the truly remarkable Janet Salter. Janet and the late Max “Sonny” Salter, along with their daughter Pepper, were instrumental in founding Happy Trails for Kids.

The Salter Family Foundation has been a source of support since our inception, and we are grateful to the entire Salter/Edmiston/Abrams family for their deep philanthropic values and desire to improve the lives of others. Through the Sonny Salter Scholarship Fund, Happy Trails for Kids offers college-bound campers and counselors financial aid. Max and Janet wanted every child to feel special. Even though they are no longer with us, their legacy continues.

This year, it is with much pride that we announce the 2020 scholarship was awarded to Florencia Valenzuela. Flo is a senior at UCLA where she belongs to the Guardian Scholars and is majoring in Sociology. She joined our Happy Trails family, first as a camper, and later becoming a beloved camp counselor - impacting hundreds of children with her compassion and dedication.

“Happy Trails has given me a community, friendship, and opportunity to grow as a leader. This camp has changed my life forever. I have gained support from our community of counselors who have shared their wisdom and experiences to help me become a stronger counselor for our campers. Being part of such an amazing group of individuals who aspire to bring pure joy into the lives of children in foster care is something you can’t get anywhere else.”





# »»» OUR IMPACT



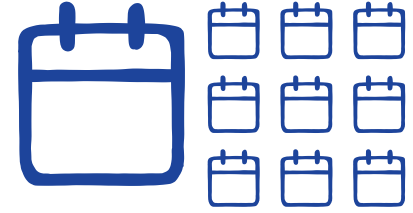
**310**

**NUMBER OF KIDS SERVED**  
58% F 42% M



**72%**

**OF COUNSELORS IDENTIFY AS A FORMER FOSTER YOUTH**



**39**

**REUNIONS EVENTS OR WORKSHOPS**



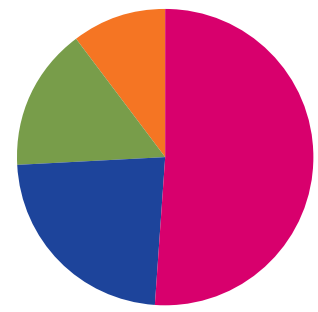
## THE IMPACT OF CAMPING, CONNECTIONS AND CONFIDENCE

**72%** of youth reported participating in virtual camp increased their confidence.  
**74%** of youth felt more connected to Happy Trails  
**83%** of foster parents report that virtual camp has a positive impact on their child.



## diversity

HISPANIC OR LATIN 46%  
 BLACK 38%  
 CAUCASIAN 6%  
 ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER 5%  
 BI/MULTI-RACIAL/OTHER 4%  
 ASIAN 1%



## types of programs

REUNION EVENTS 20  
 TRAILS TO SUCCESS/OLDER YOUTH 9  
 EDUCATIONAL 6  
 FULL FAMILY 4



# OUR TEAM



## Our Board of Directors

### CHAIRMAN

**Jon Abrams, JD**  
Partner,  
Abrams Brown LLP

### PRESIDENT

**Susan Abrams, JD**  
Policy Director,  
Children's Law Center

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Lindsay Elliott, JD, MSW**  
Happy Trails for Kids

### SECRETARY & TREASURER

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Real Estate Associate,  
Sklar Kirsh, LLP

**Deanna Cooke, Ph.D.**  
Director of  
Engaged Learning at  
Loyola Marymount University

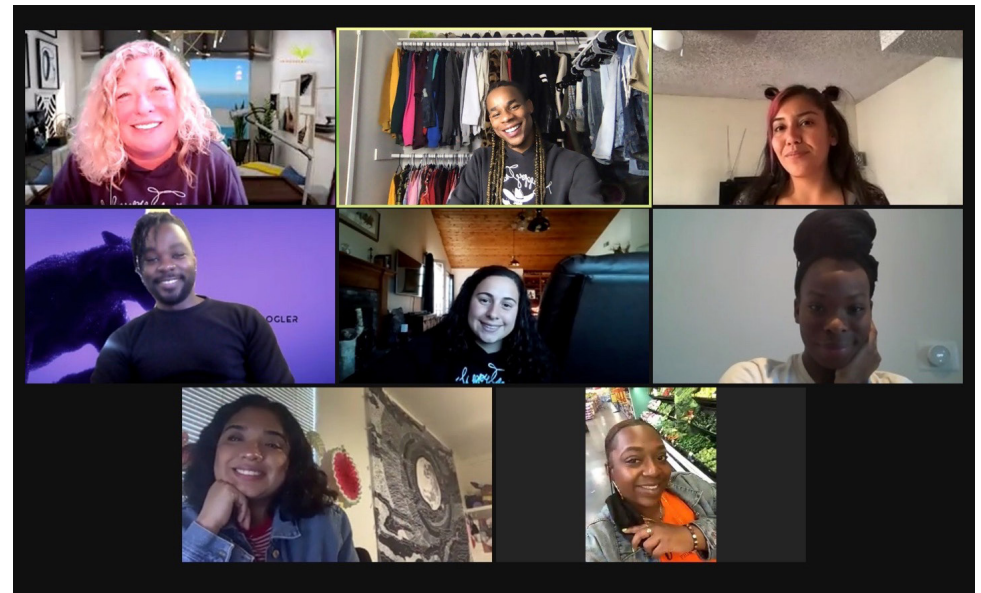
**Erika Frank, BA**  
Founder,  
Erika Frank Interiors

**Jason Gilliland, JD**  
Vice President,  
Endeavor Capital

**Jeffrey Schwartz, BS**  
Founder and Managing Partner,  
Corbel Structured Equity

**Michael Leiaghat, MBA**  
Vice President,  
Pom Pom at Home

## Our Leadership Team



**September Sucher, Camp Director**  
**Carolina Wolf, Trails to Success Project Coordinator**  
**Nadia Gonzalez, Planning Committee**  
**Lorenz Arnell, Planning Committee**  
**Eclasia Wesley, Planning Committee**  
**Anthony Cunningham, Planning Committee**  
**Ashley Velasco, Planning Committee**  
**Teaira Nelson, Planning Committee**



# \$\$\$ OUR FINANCIALS

## revenue

## expenses

**58%**

**\$ 303,450**

FOUNDATIONS AND CORPORATE GRANTS

**6%**

**\$ 32,500**

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT GRANTS, AND OTHER REVENUES

**55%**

**\$ 216,240\***

PROGRAMMING

\*2020 program expenses were significantly decreased due to COVID-related programming reductions

**7%**

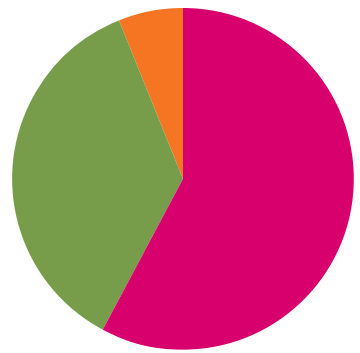
**\$ 26,873**

FUNDRAISING

**36%**

**\$ 188,599**

INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

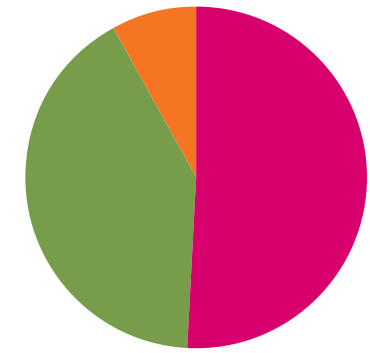


**\$ 524,549**

**37%**

**\$ 144,034**

GENERAL OPERATIONS



**\$ 387,148**





# »»» OUR SUPPORTERS



Abrams Brown <sup>LLP</sup>  
LAW OFFICES



CORBEL  
CAPITAL PARTNERS



WOOD RANCH.



THE  
GUMPERT  
FOUNDATION



Pom Pom at Home  
LIVE IN LINEN



The RD  
Foundation

THE  
RALPH M. PARSONS  
FOUNDATION



THE  
LIGHTBAY  
FOUNDATION

### **\$50,000 +**

The William Gumpert Foundation  
Salter Family Charitable Foundation

### **\$25,000 +**

Cantor Fitzgerald Relief Fund  
Tailwinds Charitable Foundation

### **\$10,000 +**

Ralph M. Parsons Foundation  
Felix Organization  
Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation  
McIntyre Family Foundation  
Oarsmen Foundation  
Corbel Capital

### **\$5,000 +**

Pom Pom at Home, LLC  
Jon Abrams  
Louis Lucido  
Victoria Pace  
David Boyle  
Barry and Wendy Meyer Foundation  
Jeffrey and Rachel Schwartz  
Mary Ann Fribourg  
Nathanial Ru  
Resnik Family Foundation

### **\$5,000 + (cont)**

Susan Zolla  
The LightBay Foundation  
Damon Stein  
RAILS International, LLC

### **\$1,000 +**

Harriet Zaretsky  
Vistas for Children  
Lumen Wealth Group  
Adam Segal  
Henderson Family Charitable Foundation  
Brett Hobbs  
Dayan Rosen  
Kelly McCreary  
Kelsey Anders  
Michael and Diane Ziering  
Nora Bernstein  
The Bloomfield Family Foundation  
Santa Monica Bay Women's Club  
Aaron Weinstein  
Frank Family Foundation  
Wood Ranch BBQ & Grill  
Paula Zahn  
Richard Cohen  
Lauren Abrams

### **\$1,000 + (cont)**

Patricia Friedman  
The Charitable Foundation  
Gillan and Greg Frame  
Robert Orgel  
Sara VanNess  
Michael Libow  
Amanda MacLennan  
Hunt Family Trust  
Janet Rotner  
Jay Lipsky  
Joni Viscusi  
Kayne Anderson Capital Advisors Foundation  
Kenneth Riemer  
Mark and Amanda Hikin  
Milken Family Foundation  
Pamela Kluft  
Pepper Edmiston  
Speiser Family Fund  
The Zahn Family Foundation  
Zachary Cohen  
Jason and Haley Gilliland  
Bambi Elliott  
Kathryn Langner



**THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR  
PARTNERS, SPONSORS  
AND SUPPORTERS.**

**Every dollar contributed makes a difference  
in our ability to improve the lives of  
children in foster care.**