# Annual Report 2024





Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on the past year, we are reminded that at the heart of our work lies a fundamental truth: every child deserves to be part of a community where they truly belong, and every family deserves the support to build resilience through life's challenges.

The stories you'll find in these pages illustrate how resilience grows when people know they are not alone. From our Resource Specialists who provide compassionate, judgment-free guidance to our training programs that build skills and community, we've seen firsthand how relationships built over time become the foundation of family strength.

The impact you'll see in this report is possible because of people like you. Donors, partners, volunteers, and advocates, you are the ones who ensure families have what they need when they need it. Your support strengthens the fabric of our community, ensuring no child or caregiver has to navigate this journey alone.

Looking ahead, we're committed to doing even more. Families deserve it. Kids deserve it. And with you by our side, we'll ensure they get it.

Thank you for being part of this work.

With gratitude,



Oriana Carey Chief Executive Officer



Stacy Meller Roard Chair



Our mission is to empower families navigating the complexities of child welfare and adoption by providing resources and connections that help them thrive.

We envision a future where every family is resilient and feels connected to a supportive community.





The strength of our tapestry comes from four essential threads that run through everything we do:

### The Thread of Connection

We weave a welcoming and inclusive environment where every family finds their place. By creating pathways to resources and fostering meaningful relationships, we ensure that no family stands alone when facing life's complexities. These connections form the foundation of our tapestry, binding us together in mutual support.

#### Weaving a New Family Story

Marian and Dan never imagined grandparenthood would mean becoming full-time caregivers—managing school routines, homework, and difficult conversations about absent parents. Like many kinship caregivers, they found themselves navigating this complex terrain with little preparation and support, feeling isolated in their experience.

When they joined our "Supporting the Caregiver to Help Youth Thrive" webinar, they discovered more than information—they found community. In this safe haven, they could express feelings about their transformed lives while learning practical strategies for managing emotions.

Afterward, Marian shared words that capture why this work matters: "You talked about stuff that we are going through...we never realized that we are not alone."

This is the power of connection—of finding your place in a tapestry larger than yourself. Through our kinship care resources, grandparents like Marian and Dan gain knowledge and the profound reassurance that they are part of a community that understands their journey.

# The Thread of Support

Within our tapestry, we create safe spaces where families can share their challenges without judgment. Recognizing that each family's pattern is distinct, we meet them exactly where they are—offering compassionate guidance and practical resources that help them continue weaving their own story with renewed confidence and hope.

#### Finding a New Pattern

"I stood at the window, watching for the social worker's car. After months of preparation, our daughter was finally coming home. I had decorated her room and already loved her with my whole heart.

I hadn't expected her tears at night, crying for her mommy. In my excitement to create our new family, I hadn't fully understood her trauma and loss. As weeks passed, my husband and I knew we needed support to help our daughter heal.

That's when we found the Coalition's webinar on attachment difficulties. Hearing directly from an adult adoptee who explained that 'attachment is a biological need and adoption is a trauma' created understanding in ways nothing else had.

This perspective changed everything. Now, I recognize the importance of honoring her feelings about being adopted and supporting her as she processes her story.

The Coalition gave our family the tools to weave healing and understanding into our lives together. I'm grateful for resources that help us nurture our child and our entire family's journey."

# The Thread of Expertise

Our tapestry combines professional knowledge with lived understanding. Our team brings both extensive training and personal experience with adoption, kinship, and non-kinship care—intertwining academic wisdom with real-world insight to offer guidance families can trust as they navigate their unique journeys.

#### **Finding New Patterns**

When John welcomed his young niece Emily into his home, he never questioned his decision to provide her with safety and stability. What he hadn't anticipated was how challenging it would be to care for a child who had experienced trauma.

Daily interactions became puzzling and overwhelming. Emily's behaviors often left John feeling helpless, unsure how to respond in ways that would help her heal.

Everything changed when John discovered our Champion Classrooms. Through these specialized training sessions, he gained tools to understand how trauma manifests in children's behaviors and practical strategies to respond with patience and empathy.

"The knowledge completely transformed our relationship," John shared.
"Instead of seeing challenging behaviors, I now recognize them as Emily's way of communicating her needs. I can create safety and consistency in ways that truly support her healing."

John's story represents hundreds of caregivers who, through our educational resources, have gained not just information but a deeper understanding of the children in their care. Each training session adds another vital thread to our tapestry—connecting caregivers with the expertise they need to nurture resilient families where every member can flourish.





As an independent voice within the intricate pattern of child welfare, we amplify the stories and needs of families who might otherwise go unheard. Our carefully cultivated partnerships with child and family-serving organizations across Wisconsin allow us to advocate for solutions that honor every family's unique experience and ensure their voices shape the larger design.

### **Weaving Together**

"The smiles on their faces as they spoke about meeting someone going through a similar experience were truly heartwarming."

This observation from Chelsea, a member of our resource team, captures the magic that happens when isolated journeys converge. At a fall conference for kinship caregivers, she witnessed three participants—a couple and a woman separately raising grandchildren—form an unexpected connection.

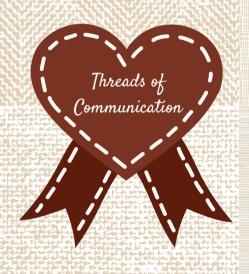
Throughout the day, they discovered their grandchildren were similar in age and they lived in neighboring communities. What began as casual conversation evolved into exchanged contact information and plans to meet again—the beginning of a support network none had possessed before.

"We often hear that relative caregiving can feel isolating," Chelsea noted, but it was evident people were forming meaningful connections that would extend far beyond a single day."

These moments of connection represent the essence of our work—creating spaces where individuals discover they're not alone, where shared experiences build bridges of understanding, and where spontaneous communities form to strengthen each participant's journey.

Patterns of Progress: Our Year in Review

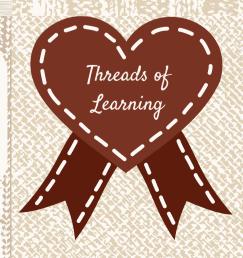
Every thread matters in our tapestry of belonging. Each connection made, resource shared, and family supported adds strength and beauty to our collective work. As we look back on 2024, we see a vibrant pattern of growth and impact emerging from the thousands of interactions, learning opportunities, and resources we've woven into the lives of families across Wisconsin.



Over 6,000 people remain connected through our email communications, weaving a network of information and support through:

- The Coalition Connection: Weekly threads of tips, resources, and opportunities that strengthen family bonds
- The Wisconsin Family Connections Center newsletter: Quarterly patterns of information that help families navigate resources and find connection
- The Caregivers for Native American Children & Youth newsletter: Cultural threads that honor and support the unique needs of tribal families
- Timely announcements that connect families to learning opportunities that enrich their caregiving journey

Nearly 3,000 people strengthened their tapestry of knowledge through our webinars, discussion groups, multi-week courses, and conferences in 2024.





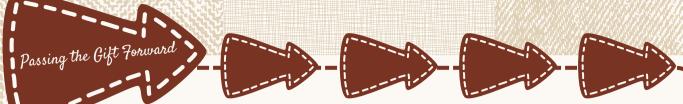
### Our digital tapestry welcomed 111,320 visitors throughout 2024, who:

- Gathered 11,227 informational articles, resources, and materials to reinforce their family fabric—a 71% increase from 2023
- Began 2,787 journeys toward becoming foster or adoptive families through requested information packets

Our resource team wove personalized support into the lives of 1,401 parents and caregivers, providing encouragement and tailored resources that addressed their unique family needs.







Rita and Mark have been part of our tapestry for over six years. As experienced caregivers, they've gathered knowledge through countless Coalition training sessions, strengthening their own family bonds.

At a recent training event, something beautiful unfolded. During a group discussion, Rita noticed several participants just beginning their caregiving journeys—feeling the same uncertainty she and Mark had once known.

Without hesitation, they stepped into mentorship roles. Rita shared favorite resources and words of encouragement born from years of experience. What began as a day of learning transformed into something more meaningful—an opportunity to extend their threads of support to others.

As they departed, Rita's words captured the essence of belonging: "Today was the best!" They had not only continued their own learning but experienced the profound satisfaction of strengthening our collective tapestry by supporting others.

This transfer of knowledge represents the heart of our mission—creating spaces where caregivers at all stages can find what they need while discovering their own capacity to contribute to our shared tapestry of belonging.

Strengthening Our Fabric: Financial Overview

Revenue: \$1,323,483

% government funding: 69%

% private donations and return on investments: 31%

Expenses: \$1,335,159

% program: 79%

% administrative: 12%

% development: 9%

Net Ending Assets: \$943,834

Weaving Tomorrow's Tapestry: Our Path Forward

As we reflect on the rich patterns and connections formed throughout this past year, we also look ahead to how we'll continue expanding our tapestry of belonging in the coming years. Our strategic vision guides us toward a future where every family is resilient and connected to a supportive community.

In the years ahead, we aim to strengthen our internal foundation and our external impact. We are working to:

Enhance our organizational resilience

Deepen community connections

Strengthen our leadership

Focus on continuous improvement through listening The tapestry we create together in the coming years will be even richer and more inclusive than before—with new patterns emerging as we respond to family needs and create innovative solutions. We invite you to continue this journey with us, adding your unique thread to our collective work of ensuring every child grows up in a strong, resilient family connected to a supportive community.







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