

# ADVOCATES

THE FUEL FOR  
CHAMPIONS

**INSIDE**

A POWERFUL RETURN:

**\$130**

IN NEW SERVICES FOR CHILDREN  
FOR EVERY \$1 DONATED

NET WT 45 yrs  
(ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN)

# LETTER FROM DONNA

**Thirteen** years ago, I accepted the position of head coach for this amazing team of advocates because I firmly believed that **advocacy** is the only option for securing lasting at-scale changes for children.

**Advocacy** forces politics and policy to align. It is a full-body contact sport that is not for the faint of heart. The arena is competitive, requiring strategy and fierce **determination**.

**The** results are in for 2025. Every dollar donated to Children First generated \$130 in permanent new public **investment** in the lives of children. Our five-year winning streak generated \$2.3 billion in new recurring public spending that is **nurturing** the hearts, minds, and bodies of the most important players - our children. This kind of impact takes the support of hundreds of donors and volunteers who propelled us to victory.

**Early** next year I will be stepping down to make way for a **new** leader who can breathe even more vitality into this team. I was so fortunate to inherit a **strong** roster built by the indefatigable Shelly Yanoff, one of the all-time greats.

**Thanks** to all our generous fans, we've grown five times stronger since then, with a lineup of twenty-seven staff. You can bet on this team being the **top ranked** champions for children for many seasons ahead. Their skills put us in the big leagues, always racking up record breaking wins for kids.

***Thank you** to all our supporters. It has certainly been the **honor** of my lifetime to lead the Children First team.*

## Children First 2025 Annual Report ADVOCATES



"Children First has the smarts and talent needed to both protect the lives of children where the politicians advance policies that will put them in harm's way while also increasing the capacity of the government to do all it can to improve the life of every child. Not a day goes by that I am not re-inspired by our work because it's making such a lasting impact."

**Javier Suarez**  
Board President, Children First



VISIT OUR  
WEBSITE  
TO LEARN  
MORE  
[childrenfirst.org](https://childrenfirst.org)

## TOTAL POWER

**9** Pieces of a major legislation advanced

**139** Public events organized

**147** Meetings with policymakers

**19** Reports published

**1,884** Citizens mobilized

**151** Youth trained to be advocates

**42** Parents trained to be leaders



“

EVERY single child - no matter their zip code, no matter the color of their skin, no matter the economic background of their parents - each should have the **FREEDOM** to chart their own course and the opportunity to succeed, and Children First works every day to make sure they do.

JOSH SHAPIRO  
Governor of Pennsylvania

”

HALLOF FAME

Moving the  
Ball for Public  
Education



Education

Serving Size: One Year (2024-2025)

Annual results

	% Daily Value*
Policies Adopted	1
Compelling Public Events	60
Meetings with Policymakers	49
Youth Learning to be Advocates	151
Citizens Rallied	950

\*The % Daily Value are based on 2024-2025 results.



**THE** Commonwealth Court found that the majority of Pennsylvania students attend schools that are intentionally shortchanged by state lawmakers. Our highly **MOTIVATED** team of hundreds of advocates coached every state lawmaker from our region, encouraging them to advance the ball for every student so they have a **BETTER** chance of graduating with real-world skills that set them up for a lifetime of success. Our work rallied lawmakers to support a \$1 billion increase for public education, marking the second year in a row that disadvantaged students win big.

**WE** led an offensive strategy that scouted and built a team of rural school leaders from across the state, and youth and educators from public and charter schools in the greater Philadelphia region. These key players pushed the message up the field, leading the way for this **HISTORIC** win.





# HALLOF FAME

Tending to **MENTAL WELLNESS** Improves the Game

“**AT** the heart of this work is a simple truth: when children get the mental health support they need, they **THRIVE**. That’s what Strong Minds, Bright Futures is fighting for, and why I’m proud to stand with Children First as a co-chair of this partnership.”

MARCUS ALLEN

CEO Big Brothers Big Sisters Independence Branch

**LITERALLY**, children’s lives are on the line. Forty percent of teens report being sad, anguished, or depressed every week, and 60% of children who take their lives never saw a mental health professional before doing so. When these two facts are read together, it’s clear our children are suffering from an invisible and deadly epidemic of mental stress. That’s why we fielded a **POWERFUL** team of more than 100 organizations from nearly every county in the state to form the Strong Minds, Bright Futures Partnership.

**THIS** first-of-its-kind partnership unites youth, parents, and professionals to deliver victories for children’s mental health. It is rapidly building a **FORMIDABLE** fan base for the state policy reforms needed to remove the obstacles blocking children from getting the mental health care they need.



## Health

Serving Size: **One Year (2024-2025)**

### Annual results

	% Daily Value*
Policies Adopted	1
Persuasive Fact-Based Reports	9
Compelling Public Events	62
Meetings with Policymakers	29
Citizens Rallied	800

\*The % Daily Value are based on 2024-2025 results.

# Fewer Penalties Increase Wins



# HALL OF FAME

**WHEN** it comes to giving youth a second chance, we are **LEADING** the charge to keep children out of jails by creating options for healing and restoration. Fortunately, the key players controlling the state’s policy playing field get that communities are safer when youth get to re-enter the game with the **SKILLS** to regulate their behavior and make good choices.



**THAT’S** why we are so proud to be one of the key strategy coaches of the PA Youth Justice Alliance, a united effort of conservative and progressive organizations lining up **AMBITIOUS** plays that already are gaining traction. The Alliance worked extra innings to educate lawmakers that locking up young people keeps them out of the game for a lifetime. Now, the Alliance’s playbook includes **RALLYING** lawmakers to adopt powerful new investments in diversion programs that promote accountability and rehabilitation, and keep children out of jail.

## Vulnerable Youth

Serving Size: **One Year (2024-2025)**

### Annual results

	% Daily Value*
Policies Adopted	3
Persuasive Fact-Based Reports	3
Compelling Public Events	26
Meetings with Policymakers	40
Citizens Rallied	390

\*The % Daily Value are based on 2024-2025 results.

**“** **RIGHT** now, some kids get a second chance that comes with programs and opportunities, and others get punishment. Children First is working to make sure that kids in the juvenile justice system have second chances, programs, and opportunities to learn to do better – without locking them up. **”**

REGINA BROWN  
Parent



# Early Childhood

Serving Size: **One Year (2024-2025)**

## Annual results

% Daily Value\*

Policies Adopted	4
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Persuasive Fact-Based Reports	2
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Compelling Public Events	76
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Meetings with Policymakers	68
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Citizens Rallied	650
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\*The % Daily Value are based on 2024-2025 results.

# HALLOF FAME

## Our Defense Held Its Ground

**IT** was a tough season for young children in Pennsylvania. The President threatened to wipe out Head Start and some of his supporters in Pennsylvania wanted to adopt slash-and-burn cuts to the state's stellar Pre-K Counts program. It was a hard-fought game, but with our partners we **PROTECTED** our field position. The state budget impasse forced play into overtime that ended with a victory for our team as state lawmakers didn't give up any yardage on **INVESTMENTS** in pre-k or child care.

**IN** addition to a defensive game, a broad coalition of early childhood and business leaders blitzed and overwhelmed lawmakers with a show of force behind an **INNOVATIVE** plan to boost the pay for child care staff given the crucial role they play in developing young minds. We got very close to breaking through, but the oversized defense of the fiscal hawks blocked our win.

“

**WE** are standing on Capitol Hill, just like our forefathers and foremothers did, **PROMISING** that if you work hard, that if you invest in yourself, if you dedicate yourself to education, you have a bright future. To put Head Start and all of the accompanying services and support infrastructure in jeopardy is to call that a mockery. You're robbing a **FUTURE** America. You're telling young children and working families that we only want your vote we don't want your voice.

APRIL WASHINGTON  
Parent

”



## LEADING THE LEAGUE IN INTERCEPTIONS

**LEAD** paint in a child's home is the primary reason that more than 11,000 children suffer lead poisoning. We are intercepting it at its source by **RECRUITING** local governments to agree to condition licensure of rental units on an updated lead safe certification and require a **GUARANTEE** on a seller's disclosure that a residence is lead safe at the time of sale. This year, **FOUR MORE** communities joined our line-up, bumping the league to 10 communities that are stopping the risk of childhood lead exposure in its tracks.

## OUR OWNERS ROLL UP THEIR SLEEVES

This year, 42 parents stepped up to **CONTRIBUTE** to our victories. They completed a robust training course, completed ambitious advocacy projects, and contributed their time and community capital to get the needs of children in front of literally **EVERY** decision maker across the five-county region. Their leadership inspired others, **SWELLING** our ranks to **1,884** parents, grandparents, and other supporters who pushed policymakers **TO DO MORE** to improve the lives of children.

## OUR MINOR LEAGUE IS HOT

**NOW** in our third year of building our AAA team, 150 high school students learned the basics of the game of **ADVOCACY** and practiced making the case to state lawmakers to meet their constitutional obligation to fund public schools. Our young leaders were more than **READY** for curve balls thrown by politicians and hit it out of the park to the delight of fans and supporters from their peers in the 13 school districts who cheered them on.

## A CONTENDER FOR RUSHING

**PENNSYLVANIA** is inching up in its ranking in adopting **FAMILY-FRIENDLY** policies. Thirteen states guarantee working parents paid time off to care for newborns or a sick family member. This year, we racked up more rushing yards than any other state as we recruited Republicans and Democrats to back the PA Family Care Act. Now, Pennsylvania is the only place where paid family leave legislation has strong, bold **BIPARTISAN** support, setting the state up to wear the championship ring once the measure is passed.



# statement of FINANCIAL POSITION

## Assets

	% Daily Value
<b>Current Assets</b>	
Cash and equivalents	\$1,703,522
Marketable securities	\$2,743,782
Pledges receivable, current portion	\$207,500
Contracts and other receivables, current position	\$2,165,626
Furniture and equipment	\$18,723
<b>Other Assets</b>	
Pledges, receivable, net of current portion	\$100,000
Contracts and other receivables, net of current portion	\$756,401
Operating lease right-of-use assets, net	\$40,932
Deposits	\$13,712
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$7,750,196</b>

## Liabilities and Net Assets

	% Daily Value
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$174,687
Accrued salaries and vacation	\$127,648
Current portion of operating lease obligations	\$90,078
Fiscal sponsorship payable	0
<b>Long-term Liabilities</b>	
Operating lease obligations, net of current portion	0
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$392,413</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	
Board designated, without donor restrictions	\$2,784,000
With donor restrictions	\$4,573,784
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$7,357,784</b>
<b>*TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$7,750,196</b>



# SOURCES & USES

Foundations and corporations	\$719,045
Individuals	\$858,156
Contracts	\$216,488
United Way	\$71,628
Government grants	\$1,327,086
Special events	\$283,895
Interest and dividends	\$88,390
In-kind	\$2,612
Net assets released	\$2,230,932
<b>Revenues</b>	<b>\$5,798,232</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Program services	\$4,959,175
Management	\$371,943
General	\$447,733
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$5,778,851</b>
<b>*NET OPERATING INCOME</b>	<b>\$19,381</b>

“

SUPPORT ONE  
CHILD AND IT  
MOVES ONE  
CHILD. CHANGE  
BAD POLICY AND  
IT MOVES ALL  
CHILDREN. THAT’S  
WHY I SUPPORT  
CHILDREN FIRST.

”

Dave Griffith

More from our supporters and donors →

2024 - 2025  
CITIZEN LEADERS

ANONYMOUS  
CAROLYN & TIM ADAMS  
LINDSAY & SAM ALBRIGHT  
MAJID & MARY ALSAYEGH  
AMELIA ASKEW  
LAWRENCE BOMBACK  
DAVID CAMP & GWEN BOROWSKY  
RENEE CARDWELL HUGHES  
VINH CHAU &  
    JUDE BORNSTEIN-CHAU  
KATHERINE CHRISTIANO  
JOLLEY CHRISTMAN  
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MICHAEL CHURCHILL & TASHA STONOROV  
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HELEN EVELEV  
WILLIAM EWING  
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DAVID HACKETT

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MARY & HOWARD HURTIG  
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PHILIP JAURIGUE  
JEANNIE KAHLEY  
RACHEL KAPLAN  
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KENNETH & EVE KLOTHEN  
LEO KOREIN  
DAVID LAIGAIE  
CHARISSE LILLIE  
ELAINE LINDY  
JOHN MCFADDEN & LISA KABNICK  
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ED MAHLMAN & MOYA KINNEALEY  
DAVID MANDELL  
CARLA MANLEY-RUSSOCK  
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DIEGO MATAMOROS  
COLLEEN MCCAULEY & PAUL DZIEWISZ  
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REAGAN WILLARD  
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WENDY WOLF  
LINDA WRIGHT MOORE

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AARON APPEL  
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STEVEN ASBELL  
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TOBIAS BRUHN  
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SUSAN COUSOUNIS  
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RECHANGELIE CRUZ  
CRYSTAL CUEVAS  
JEFFREY DANZIGER  
THERESA DEANGELIS  
TAD & M. CANDACE  
    DECKER



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JEFFREY HOWARD  
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CORY JOHNSON  
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LAVAL MILLER-WILSON  
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DALE MITCHELL  
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GEORGE MORSE  
ANDREA MOSELLE

DAN MUROFF  
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FRANCESA CHAPMAN  
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ERIN OWEN  
HEDRA PACKMAN  
MICHELE PALAMOUNTAIN  
JANET PANNING  
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ROSA PARKS-GREEN  
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KATHY HIRSH-PASEK  
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JOHN PHILLIPS  
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RALPH & CHERYL PINKUS  
MEREDITH POLLOCK  
JANE PROCOPIO  
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ROSELYN PURNELL  
MICHAEL RANCK  
STEPHANIE RAVETT  
JOAN REIVICH  
VANESSA RENEE  
SARA RESZUTEK  
JENNIFER RETIG  
PRIYANKA & ULISES REYES-  
KAURA  
BETH REZET & GREG  
FROMELL  
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LEN RIESER  
DANA RIKER JACKSON  
SUSAN ROBBINS  
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ELAINE SIMON  
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JEAN SMITH  
JENNIFER SMITH  
CAROL SMYTHE  
JOY SOTO  
JEFF SPARAGANA  
ANN SPISHOCK  
JAMES & LISA STEIKER  
JUDITH & JONATHAN STEIN  
SARA VERNON STERMAN  
MARY STRASSER  
ABBY THAKER  
LETTY THALL  
ELIZABETH THOMPSON  
SUSAN THOMPSON  
ASHLEY TOBIN  
JENSEN TOUSSAINT  
MARGRET TROTZKY  
HIN WING TSE  
WALTER TSOU  
NICK TURK  
SANGEETHA UMAPATHY  
HALEY VELLETRI  
STEVEN VENA  
ALICE & BOB VERNON  
LISA WAGNER  
MARIA WALKER  
ARLEEN WALKER  
CATHY WANG



I SUPPORT CHILDREN FIRST BECAUSE  
THEY WORK TIRELESSLY TO ENSURE  
PENNSYLVANIA CHILDREN ARE WELL-  
EDUCATED, HEALTHY, SAFE AND  
SUPPORTED. THE QUALITY OF OUR  
CHILDREN’S FUTURE IS THE QUALITY OF  
EVERYONE’S FUTURE! DawnLynn Kacer

2024 - 2025  
INDIVIDUAL  
SUPPORTERS

EVERETT WARNER  
LAUREN WECHSLER  
ELLIOT WEINBAUM  
DEBRA WEINER  
MARLENE WEINSTEIN  
DEB WEINSTEIN  
ML WERNECKE  
DWAYNE WHARTON  
MAYA WHARTON  
MAZZ WHITAKER  
MATTHEW WHITEHORN  
DAVID & BETSY WICE  
SCOTT WILDS  
JOSEPH WILLARD  
SARAH WINTERS  
LORETTA WITT  
DANIEL WOFFORD  
FLORA WOLF & LASLO BOYD  
TANISHA WOODS  
MARY BETH YARISH  
GERALD ZAHORCHAK

2024 - 2025  
BUSINESS,  
ORGANIZATIONAL  
SUPPORTERS

ASSOCIATION OF ISLAMIC  
CHARITABLE PROJECTS  
  
ALTA MANAGEMENT  
  
AMERIHEALTH CARITAS  
  
ARCHER & GREINER, PC  
  
BLACK CHILD  
DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE -  
PHILADELPHIA & VICINITY  
  
BEN FRANKLIN  
TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS  
OF NORTHEASTERN  
PENNSYLVANIA  
  
BOMBACK ASSOCIATES

BRIGHTSIDE ACADEMY, INC  
  
BRINKER SIMPSON &  
COMPANY  
  
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF  
PHILADELPHIA  
  
CLEAR POINT COMMUNICATIONS  
  
COMCAST NBC UNIVERSAL  
  
COMMUNITY BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTH  
  
COZEN O'CONNOR  
  
CREEDON MANAGEMENT  
ASSOCIATES  
  
DELAWARE COUNTY MEDICAL  
SOCIETY PUBLIC HEALTH FUND  
  
ELEVATE 215  
  
FOUNDATIONS COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIP  
  
THE FOUNDATION FOR  
DELAWARE COUNTY  
  
FRANK DALY & ASSOCIATES  
  
HANGLEY ARONCHICK SEGAL  
PUDLIN & SCHILLER  
  
HEALTH PARTNERS PLANS  
  
HIGHMARK HEALTH  
  
HOLMAN  
  
INDEPENDENCE BLUE CROSS  
  
INDEPENDENCE FOUNDATION  
  
JEFFERSON HEALTH  
  
KATE & CO.  
  
KEYSTONE FIRST  
  
LARRY FARMBRY & ASSOCIATES  
  
MAYFIELD SITE CONTRACTORS  
  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF PEDIATRIC NURSE  
PRACTITIONERS - DELAWARE  
VALLEY CHAPTER

PA HOUSING FINANCE  
AGENCY  
  
PENNSYLVANIA STATE  
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION  
  
PHILADELPHIA FEDERATION  
OF TEACHERS  
  
PHILADELPHIA HOUSING  
AUTHORITY  
  
PK FINANCIAL GROUP  
  
PNC  
  
POTTSTOWN HEALTH AND  
WELLNESS FOUNDATION  
  
PREMIER ENVIRONMENTS  
REINVESTMENT FUND  
  
RIDGE POLICY GROUP  
  
SAUL EWING LLP  
  
SCHWEIGER DERMATOLOGY  
GROUP  
  
S.R. WOJDAK & ASSOCIATES  
  
STRATEGIC NONPROFIT  
FINANCE  
  
TD  
  
TEAMSTERS LOCAL  
502 - COMMONWEALTH  
ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL  
ADMINISTRATORS  
  
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY -  
PUBLIC POLICY & GOV  
RELATIONS  
  
UNITED WAY OF GREATER  
PHILADELPHIA AND  
SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY  
  
VANGUARD

2024 - 2025  
FOUNDATIONS

AMJ FOUNDATION  
  
ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION  
  
BARRA FOUNDATION  
CHG CHARITABLE TRUST  
  
CHILDREN CAN SHAPE THE FUTURE  
  
CHRISTIAN R. AND MARY F. LINDBACK  
FOUNDATION  
  
DELAWARE COUNTY INTERACTIVE GAMING  
REVENUE AUTHORITY  
  
THE DELAWARE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY  
PUBLIC HEALTH FUND, INC.  
  
DOLFINGER-MCMAHON FOUNDATION  
  
ELEVATE215  
  
ELIZABETH R. AND ARTHUR E. ROSWELL  
FOUNDATION  
  
FAMILIES FOR EQUITABLE SCHOOL FUNDING  
  
THE FOUNDATION FOR DELAWARE COUNTY  
  
GREEN FAMILY FOUNDATION  
  
HAMILTON FAMILY CHARITABLE TRUST  
  
HENDERSON FOUNDATION  
  
THE ALLEN HILLES FUND  
  
THE HURON FOUNDATION  
  
INDEPENDENCE FOUNDATION  
  
IVYWOOD FOUNDATION  
  
LENFEST INSTITUTE FOR JOURNALISM  
  
LEO MODEL FOUNDATION  
  
MARRAZZO FAMILY FOUNDATION  
  
NARARO FOUNDATION  
  
THE GRACE S. AND W. LINTON NELSON  
FOUNDATION

NEUBAUER FAMILY FUND  
  
THE WILLIAM PENN FOUNDATION  
  
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
  
PHILADELPHIA FOUNDATION  
  
PHILADELPHIA HEALTH PARTNERSHIP  
  
PINCUS FAMILY FOUNDATION  
  
POTTSTOWN REGIONAL COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
  
PRITZKER CHILDREN'S INITIATIVE  
  
SCATTERGOOD FOUNDATION  
  
SPRINGPOINT PARTNERS  
  
STRADA EDUCATION FOUNDATION  
  
THE MARNI SWEET FUND  
  
UNITED WAY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA  
AND SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY  
  
US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, EIR  
PROGRAM  
  
VAN AMERINGEN FOUNDATION  
  
VANGUARD STRONG START FOR KIDS  
PROGRAM  
  
VOICES FOR HEALTHY KIDS  
  
W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION

“ THERE IS NOT A TOUGHER,  
MORE FOCUSED, MORE  
"GET AFTER IT"  
ORGANIZATION THAN  
CHILDREN FIRST.  
Rashanda Perryman





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# NUTRITION FACTS

Serving Size: **One Year (2024-2025)**

## Annual report

% Daily Value

### Passion

drives us to fight to make  
the lives of children better.

100%

### Know-how

empowers us to secure  
game-changing reforms.

100%

### Experience

fuels us and makes our  
advocacy second to none.

100%

\*The % Daily Value are based on 2024-2025 results.